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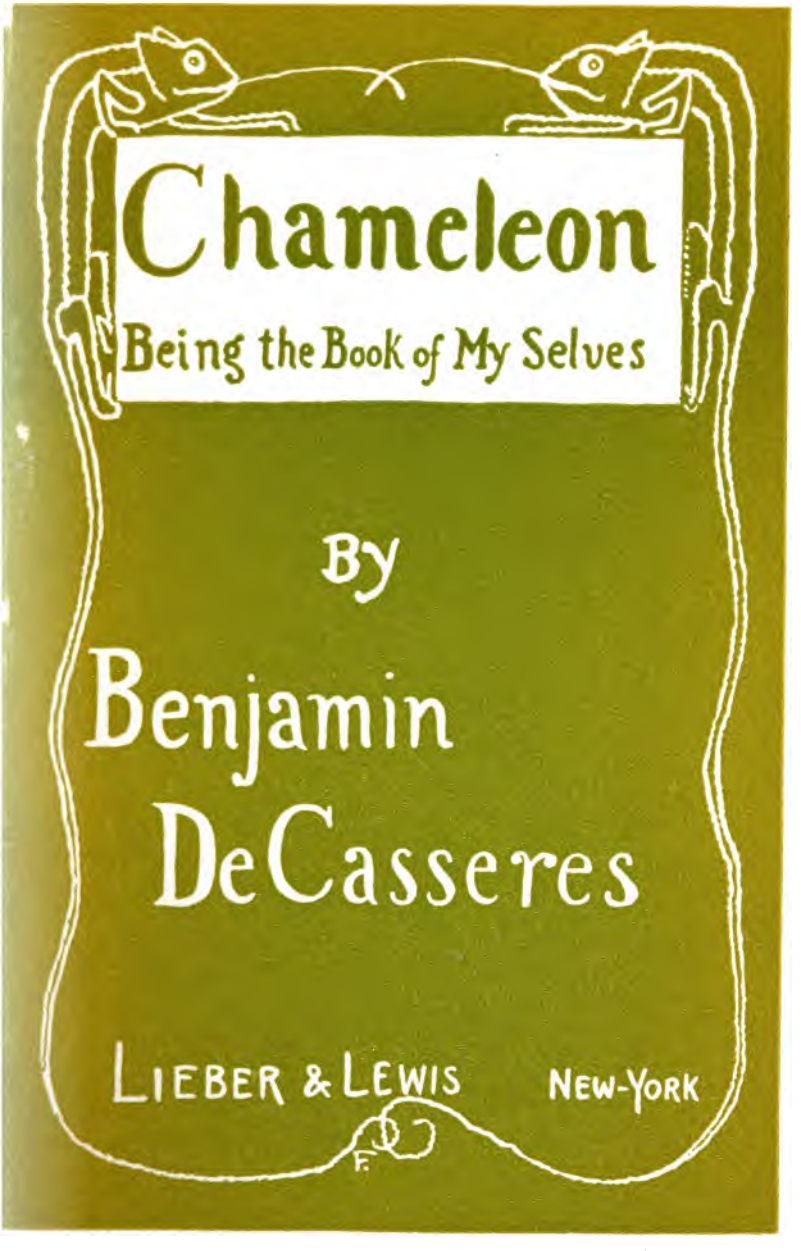
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Being the Book of My Selves
By
Benjamin
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THE BRAIN AND THE WORLD

WE never come into contact with things, but only with their images. We never know the real—only effigies of the real. We do not pursue objects; we pursue the reflection of objects. We do not possess things; we possess the emotions that things inspire.

If I pluck a flower and hold it in my hand I have merely come into contact with an image in my brain created by certain complex influences transmitted through the senses from an unknowable. No one pursues power or wealth; he pursues ideas and images of power and wealth. Strictly speaking, I do not live in a house, in the air, but live in my house-image, my air-image. Images and thoughts being the very pulp of consciousness, it follows that in images and thoughts there lies the only reality we can ever know. Imagination and its elements are not the effigies of matter, but what we term matter is the

effigy of our images. Hence the imaginary world—the world of intellect and images—is the only real world. It is the unanalyzable data of consciousness.

We never get over the threshold of our images. We live in images whether in rest or motion. Illusion does not consist in believing our images and dreams to be real, but in believing that there exists anything else but images and dreams. The illusions of the brain are the only realities; they become delusions when we try to externalize them. All practical men are insane because they seek to externalize the internal. All poets and philosophers are sane because they seek to internalize the external.

Idolatry is the worship of the non-existent. All practical life is founded on the belief that there is something to be had outside of the self, that there is a pleasure to be had in things *per se*, that Mecca is a place, not a belief. Matter is something fashioned by the brain, an eidolon of the will, the symbol of an image. The practical person tries to grasp the symbol; the poet tries to grasp the image. The former must always fail because we never

come into contact with matter, which is the symbol of ideas; no mind ever comes into contact with the external world. The latter (the poet) always succeeds because he arrays himself in himself; lives immediately in the thought, image or emotion that a thing creates; he knows that the materialization of an image is the substitution of a symbol for a reality.

The sense of universal disillusion, of the almost total absence of relation between dream and deed, is the ever-recurring proof of the egocentricity of man. He is the sun around which swing and dance the worlds tossed off through immeasurable time; worlds so seeming real, but which are mere spawn of dreams, man's chance-litter. To stretch out the hand from the House of Images seeking to grasp this domed and pinnacled mirage is the signal that wakes the imps of irony from their subterranean vaults and sends them swarming and gibbering over the roofs and through the streets of that image-chrismed city, now suddenly become a deserted city of rotted rookeries.

The eternal legend of the Brain and the World, of the Image and the Mirage is

found in all ages—in the fables of Tantalus and Ixion, in the world-wisdom of Don Quixote and Faust, in "El Magico Prodigioso" of Calderon, in the Dhamapada, in the Ibsen plays. The legerdemain of the senses it is that scratches those lines of sorrow at mouth-ends, draws heavy blank curtains over the wild scenery of the eye, sets a flag of truce on the purposeful brow and sends us to cower behind the breastworks of an eternal reticence.

Men sail the seas for adventure, travel towards the poles for the novel and seek in remote lands the tang of the strange, the witchery of the weird; but the adventure, the novelty, the tang and the witchery are in men themselves. I am my own novelty, my own adventure; it is I who give tang to life. I am bewitched of wonder and mystery—than me there is nothing more weird that is conceivable. He who goes a-seeking leaves himself behind. Other than your soul there is no reality. We can go toward nothing unless that thing has first come toward us. The brain is not only the center of gravity, but is gravity. The Will is not only the inventor of the universe, but is the universe.

We go toward ourselves. My images and dreams and thoughts are eggs. I enwomb and unwomb myself. I have infinities, eternities, nadirs, zeniths boxed in my brain. I am always delivering myself to myself, cannot forsake myself, cannot possibly exist in the world—seeing that the world exists in me.

The world began with mind; before that it was only a possibility. The brain is the radiant hub of the universal illusion. We have exiled the stars in their spaces and imprisoned light in its wall-less tombs of air. Pole star and the frozen mountains of the moon are the mere flotsam and jetsam of our evolved and highly elaborated imagining. All—all is only the balustrade of the mind, out on the furthest portals of which this mysteriously appeared I peers for all its days at the image-children that it has flung off in its incalculable evolutions.

This ethereal upstart with the brazen acclaim, this image-haunted mystery that we name Man, who, after all, is but a slight excess of Nothing and yet the measure of all, a drop of blazing oil that has bubbled out of a beaker of flame in the hands of a Something—what does he know?

There are the image and the imagined, the Brain and the World, the Eternal Ghost fabricating its world-shrouds.

THE MIRTH OF THE BRAIN

WHY is there laughter in an existence that none of us laughs at? Why is there mirth in a world of struggle and precarious chances? We come into life with a scream of agony and go out of it with palms extended, signifying nothing. Proserpina is the goddess of death, and no one has been found stronger than she—except it be Momus, the god of laughter, whom Proserpina cannot slay.

Laughter is no accident. It is something rooted in the depths of our being. Pain is deeper than all thought; laughter is higher than all pain. Care cudgels us with an ebon stave—but look above! there is Laughter—the fairy goddess waving a silver-bright wand.

There is a comic spirit in things as well as a tragic spirit. The gods bowl us over and still we make merry. Hurricane, earthquake, war and fire conspire to an-

nihilate us, but jocosity and joviality flow in an unbroken stream from the springs of buoyancy set deep within the soul of man.

Only the heart suffers. The brain is the peaceful, undisturbed, eternal spectator of the monstrous paradox called Life. The mind never worries, is never perturbed, is never in pain. The heart—that great lupanar of desires—may seduce the brain to participate in its earth-itches; but in itself the mind is a detached, impersonal observer of the great tangled web of passion and error that is spun in the heart of man.

Mind as mind has the placidity of a mirror. All things are reflected in it, but for the image of Lady Macbeth it cares no more than for the image of Falstaff.

The unconscious universe struggled and fought until it evolved a brain. In mind the star and plant rise to thought. The World-Spirit contemplates itself through the brain of man. It is the light born of darkness. Through the brain nature passes from actor to observer, from blind, eyeless combat to wide-eyed intelligence, from an immemorial pain to the beginnings of an immemorial mirth.

Impersonal contemplation—that is the

secret of laughter. Mirth is as old as the first mind that detached itself—even for a single hour—from the service of the emotions and the lower nature generally. The first man who said, "I will retire from the combat a little while to the hill to watch the fray" was the first man who laughed with his brain. Distance, aloofness, height strike out by a magic psychic friction the spark that bears in its centre the germ of philosophy. Only cosmic comedians become as the gods.

The elements of the incongruous and ridiculous run through all the affairs of men. The intervention of the unknown at each moment in their affairs and schemes whirls them off their feet and elicits from Intellect the same gleeful scream that children give vent to in a circus when the trapeze performer whirls unexpectedly through the air. With the significant difference that the circus acrobat knows where he is going to land, but the acrobat Man in this great cosmic circus is caught unawares and lands where Circumstance forgot to spread her nets.

The World-Spirit is a freakish, ironic spirit. It contrives strange outcomes to our

conscious plans. We plan and plan in one spirit, and behold! another spirit takes possession. Dante's Inferno, written in a religious fervor as an exposition of theological conception, set at work the forces which finally overthrew those very conceptions. The Inquisition, instituted to fasten by force a religious creed on the world, was the means that brought about the final annihilation of the means. Anarchy spreads just in the measure that you persecute it. The means employed to enslave a people are the very means that awaken the passion for liberty in their souls. There is no surer way to keep forces in motion that you wish to annihilate than to persistently struggle against them. If you wish to see how far a pendulum will swing to the right, draw it to the extreme left.

This is the Immanent Mirth in things—the quiet laughter of the hidden Prestidigitateur; the exquisite mockery of nature which made hilarious the days of Rabelais.

Leisure is the condition of the growth of the smile in the brain. Laughter comes with contemplation. A man may take joy in his work, but he cannot laugh at it. Mirth is a kind of serene scepticism. It

comes only with intelligence. The perception that life is something of a joke may possibly come to a boor laboring in the fields, but it clothes itself to him as a bitter jest, for his brain is still the handmaiden of his stomach. The leisure of Mephistopheles, the intelligence of Lucifer—these must be approached to perceive the depth on depth of world-jollity.

Fanaticism, the man with the fixed idea—the antithetical mental attitude to the world-sceptic—is incapable of cerebral mirth. The finest minds are those in which intelligence and insight spread out like the gradual opening of a circular fan. They come to perceive all sides in one glance. They are like a man who stands at the north pole—all longitudes centre in him; he sees all the imaginary lines that men map and number and believe in. He is conscious for the first time of the absurdity of direction; he comes to know in a flash how purely arbitrary are affirmative ideas about anything.

And he laughs a long laugh into the skies.

The dominant note observable in Nature—observable only to the eye of the mind

that has severed itself from the prejudices of the will—is blitheness. She seems always to be laughing; her most terrible moments are like the scowls that elders put on in front of naughty children who really amuse them—the mocking mask of mirth. Nature goes her way through her four seasons with a carelessness, an *insouciance*, a *sangfroid* such as men have who care nothing for death or who have learned the fine secret that the tomb covers but does not hide. Life is a huge joke to the Immortal Mother. She laughs eternally because she is wiser than her children. She knows nothing is lost. She knows that death is recomposition and pain is the way character is tooled.

How deep was Shakespeare's mirth when he gave us Puck! Puck, the lordly imp of a topsy-turvy universe; Puck who is the seer par excellence of the world; Puck who put a girdle of laughter around the universe; Puck who smiled and smiled and was not a villain—only a divine sportsman who played battledore and shuttlecock with us in the fields of Eternity.

There is quenchless grief in all things—if we will have it so. Move up into the

higher altitudes and the grief in all things turns to a quenchless mirth.

The higher altitude is just that step from the heart to the brain.

WONDER

TO see, one must close the eyes. This is the paradox of insight—a seeing into. The physical world is nothing but insulated force. It is only the mind's eye that can pierce the arras of images and behold the unimaginable.

The mystic sense is a form of vascular activity. It is the palpitant ethereal in us, the radio-activity of the corpuscle. In the sluiceways of the brain it rises to consciousness.

Our brains are portable universes, and our souls are unbirthed worlds. God created the material world, Bishop Berkeley destroyed it, and Herbert Spencer recreated it. We are coequal with the creative gods. Man weaves microcosm into macrocosm, bastes the ideal to the real, hems soul to body. He tracks the roving ideal from its lair in the cell of the polyp to its full growth in his own brain, and he pins the Eternal to a Law. His dreams trans-

figure the Known to the Unknowable.

We have no criterion for anything. We live in a Mystery. The data of life are pleasure and pain, and these may be myths; an illusion of the nerve cells.

Seas of sound, light and motion swirl in our brains, and the "great processes" are cell-eddy. Thought is cerebral sight. We may trail Circumstance back to the Primal Antagonism, and there it is lost. Consciousness is the flash produced by friction. Birth is recomposition of old matter, and death is dissolution and recomposition. Mind is evolved from mud, and mud is mind in transition. Form is purely accidental, and the accidental is the unexpected inexorable. Time is the space between thoughts, and thought is Time spluttering. Space is the distance between two illusions, and illusions are what-might-have-been projected on the blank screen of tomorrow. All growth presupposes pain, and all pain engenders growth. Society is the systematization of instincts, and instincts are stratified lusts. All knowledge is word-juggle. To know all would be to know nothing.

The mystic waits and wonders.

And this Wonder is the back-stairs to

the stars—it is the Northwest Passage to the pinnacle of the cosmos. It is where one beholds most, but where one knows least. It is to feel all things—yet to stand in universal relations. It is a vision of things in their totality but not in their wholeness.

Everything is grounded in mystery. Everything is swimming, and the stable does not exist. Life is a series of guesses, and there is mystery in a match. The commonplace is the habitual, and the habitual is a mystery that has grown stale from sense-insistence. Life undulates; there is no such thing as a level; a straight line is a myth, and all directions are indirections. Up and down are movable points on horizons that do not exist; focus is an eye-trick, and motion is cell-palpitation.

All things radiate from a common point, and differences are the same looked at from various angles. The sap that flows in the tree, the blood that flows in the veins, the fires that flame from the sun, the waters that run to the stars, and the passion litanies breathed by lovers are aspects of force. Star-shine and eye-glance and water-gleam are the same.

The star sees itself through the medium of the human eye, and the moon shines on itself.

Law created the brain, and the brain is a crucible of Law. So each thing is a compendium of all things, and still the All is not found.

All acts are multiplied in the doing. Our breathing builds or destroys unknown universes, and a gesture is a signal to eternity. The cells are chalices of desire. Every act is a breeder of beings. On what shore breaks the last vibration caused by the lowering of an eyelash? Does the lover alone throb with ecstasy when his beloved's eyes thicken with love-mists? And who shall say that our most subtle smile does not stir to life a thousand unseen existences that have been quivering on the thresholds of life?

No act ever succeeds or fail; it does both. We influence the unknown at every turn. We are unknown workers in an unknown world. We weave tomorrow on the shuttle of today and unravel the past each minute. All things are trying to stand still and go on at the same time. Men desire rest and motion simultaneously. They desire to go

on in order to be able to rest. Self-conservation is the basic principle in both rest and motion. It is an everlasting ebb and flow. But the mind ravished by Wonder is beyond ebb and flow.

"Things pass into their opposites by accumulation of indefinable quantities," says Walter Pater. In that process is buried the paradox of evolution and the concept which breeds the mystic mind. Hate is comic, for you shall in time become that which you hate; and the thing you scorn—behold! that thou art! "Tvat Twam Asi" (for that thou art) repeats the Hindoo sage when the West talks of Me, Thou, It. "Tvat Twam Asi" repeat Schopenhauer and Emerson. A fact is but the glazed surface on an abysmal mystery. It is the symbolist in art who knows this. And all symbolists are mystics.

Evolution is a method, and method is the mantle of law. The Law itself lies out of time and space. It is the Spencerian Eternal Energy; it is that which knows neither "upward" nor "downward." Like ether, it permeates all things; it floods the atoms; it is world-shine—consciousness.

Our souls are a method—part of the

mantle; and every act is redolent of the past. Things rise to a summit and flow down on the other side, and the baby in its birth hour may have attained the pinnacle of the inconceivable, for the birth of a babe has more of accomplishment in it than the maturity of a man.

Nothing is spurious; all things are in their place. Artificiality is the curd on the natural. No man wills; he is willed—for he is a growth, and his roots are in the primordial. The secret is in the seed, and the seed is the secret. No man can say, "I am evolved;" he is forever evolving. He is a "God in the crib," and his acts are only hints of his dreams.

Decay is growth seen from the other side. Decay and growth flout permanence. An eternal continuance dragging anchor; a measured swirl of unmeasured waters; light flowering to form; abstraction masking as a concretion—what else do we know?

We came from the simian and tend to the sublime; and as the simian for ages was big with man, so is the sublime heavy with its unborn gods. The worm treads fast upon the heels of God. Change has woven shrouds for myriads of Creators, for the

universe subsists *en passant*. The opal tint in the dawn was spun by the lilies of the field, and the human form is chiselled star-dust. Alchemy is as universal as gravitation.

The universe began in an equilibration and will end in an equilibration. A sigh, an unrest, a faint ripple caused by some antagonistic principle—and the Law moved, and suffering was born. The pageantry of the Fates began. Vega in Lyra and the ant on its hill were diswombed in travail.

But why? With that question Wonder falls on us.

You cannot seize upon the past or the future. The universe is an eternal minute forever tottering to its doom—cosmic splash; torrent-mist; dream follicles that have burst on the brain walls. Our sublimest act is still the abracadabra of an Unknown God—a God who hides behind a leaf and scribbles his contrarieties; a God who is flea and futurity; who is oxygen and Arcturus. There are cabals held in the acorn, and the gods are enthroned in diatom. The radiating laws are hubbed on a pimple, and "evolution" is but a spoke in the Wheel of Fire.

Genius has Wonder; it is its sixth sense. The being that has envisaged the cosmos in a glance exhales the ether of the unplumbed spaces his eyes have beheld. He is a white flame fleshed for the nonce. And his poems and pictures and philosophies are fables of Wonder.

Without this sense of Wonder the singing of the stars is calliope music; the universe is doggerel.

With the mystic gleam the universe is still doggerel—but scrawled by a Shakespeare.

Science is bankrupt. The unlettered mystic in the Indian forest three thousand years ago knew what science is just now beginning to tell us. They now announce that atoms are, after all, but centres of force. "There is no such thing as matter," said the Hindoo complacently ages ago. Science has discovered a substance called radium, which gives forth particles without losing weight. Nothing can be lost, nothing can be gained in an infinite universe, has been the essence of mystical teaching from Heraclitus to Emerson. Wonder's method is divination.

To the mystic, life is a "conscious slum-

ber." Goethe and Balzac were great somnambulists who in a dream wrote hastily and feverishly what they thought they saw, then went back to bed again. Poe's soul never awakened to a single reality. From the ebon vaults of the Unconscious it stole upon a world of toppling shadows, ashen days and vaporous, opiate sallows. Instead of universal law he felt the universal awe, and his life was a meditation on shadows.

Walt Whitman had but to name a thing and straightway that thing became a mystery. This solid-seeming and substantial world he made to reel and hung the mystic glamour of his soul upon the ant. He saw no greater mystery than the hair on the back of his hand, and he said that "a glance of the eye shall confound the science of all time."

The plodding fact-grubber crawls upon a rim like a fly on a vase, but the mystic is the light within.

To those who walk the world with open eyes yet see not—those bald realists who believe that when you have named a star you have explained it—ideas stand for things. But to the mystic things stand for

ideas. They translate particulars into generals. Goethe drew the universe into his soul, and his dying words were, "More Light." He had translated all things into thoughts and all thoughts into visions, and, standing of all men of the century on the pinnacle of the spirit, he still stood in the dark. The light he had was just great enough to show him the impenetrability of the darkness beyond and around. But he fared forth with Wonder in his soul.

The mystics in philosophy, literature and art do not differ essentially in any age. Environment cannot touch them. Knowledge comes—and goes; the mystic lingers. He is above time and clime, and the "modern investigators" are ancient crooners that shall be. Heraclitus or Maeterlinck, Lucretius or Tolstoi, Spinoza or Thomas Hardy, Sir Thomas Browne or Amiel, Buddha or Carlyle, Shelley or D'Annunzio —their premise is everlastingly the same: Shadows that emerge from a Void, scud across the earth, some in fury, some in pallid calm—and then the Void again. A ring, a circle; an arc of consciousness, an arc of sleep; an emergence and a disappearance—like that illusion of stagecraft where-

in fifty men, by marching in a circle before and behind the scenery, simulate an infinite host—that is life.

These solemn-suited Brethren of Wonder dwell in the husk of things, but are not of the husk. They are wizard souls glaring through the lattice of dreams, praying sceptics immured in the Tomb with the Black Panels. Their type of face is the face of Percy Bysshe Shelley—the Angel Israfel in flesh.

THE ALMIGHTINESS OF MIGHT

THE refinements of civilization are more dangerous than the frank brutalities of savagery; it is a substitution of the serpent for the prowling man-eater; the substitution of an insidious corruption for a ceaseless battle in the daylight. In a state of nature the weakest go to the wall; in a state of over-refined civilization both the weak and the strong eventually go to the wall.

Civilization is the last refinement of the herding instinct. All weakness is centripetal. Strength is centrifugal. The "social instinct" is a phase of fear.

As Nietzsche has pointed out, our "rights" are our mights—that is, the thing we have the power to do (if there go along with it the power to immunize oneself from penalty) we do; in fact, must do. Government imposes penalties on those who transgress its ordinances—that is, it opposes power with power; escapes a pain by pre-

scribing one. The excuse made is that "the welfare of the whole race" is at stake—that is, organized society must forever make war on minorities. And yet, if our view take in a great space of time, we see these minorities becoming majorities and the majorities passing into minorities. When the latter are ensconsed in power they, forgetting their former "rights" as minorities, use exactly the same methods to perpetuate themselves as did their enemies, now their prey.

The law of gravitation is the only discoverable moral law in the universe. Gravitation is involved in every "right." Without gravitation the words good and evil could not exist; we could have no attractions and repulsions. The things to which I am attracted and which are attracted to me—those things I have a "right" to; they are my veiled destinies, my veritable selves. A "right" springs from a need, and need is the ethical equivalent of the physical law of gravitation.

The obstacles that stand in the path of my inexorable attractions must die—or else slay me. It is merely a question of which is the stronger, not whose is the trespass.

Strength and Strength's will is the supreme ethic. All else are dreams from hospital beds, the sly goodness of weak souls.

It is the weak man who urges compromise—never the strong man. A weak man is one who has not the courage of his gravitations; a strong man is the converse of this. Power knows no evil but the threatened destruction of itself.

The essence of willing is self-destruction —and aggression; self-exploitation cannot be conceived of except as aggression. A society prospers materially in so far as each individual aggresses on the other. It is called "Business." The problem is how to subtilize it. "Immorality" is the essence of "progress." There is, it is true, a common sense that "holds a fretful realm in awe." But it is no more "moral" than gravitation or the centrifugal and centripetal forces that preserve the orbit of the planet. It is a mechanical law with social implications.

This element of warfare is so deeply rooted in the nature of things—it is so absolutely a necessity if the universe is to continue to exist—that Nature in order to perpetuate herself everlastingly invents opposites

to attain her ends. Thus love. Affection is one of the World-Spirit's devices for more effectually carrying on her war of part against part. It is a minor device in the Great Method. Woman is the strong man's recreation; or, in cosmic language, after depletion, replenishment.

Supreme happiness engenders not only the feeling of exalted well-being in ourselves but an overmastering desire to make others suffer by either forcibly imposing our happiness upon them or tantalizingly parading it before their eyes. Or the supremely happy may show the masked cruelty of this state by patronizing those in pain—by creating obligations, to be collected in the form of charity-kisses when their own painful season comes on. To prey—to prey—that is our essence. If we cannot be powerful and happy and prey on others we invent conscience and prey on ourselves.

Have you divined the secret thoughts of those who privily pride themselves on their life of self-sacrifice?—how, finding none to pat them on the back, they fabricate in their own souls a Greater than they who tells them each night: "Well done, my

servant." Ah! the compliments this mystic being pays them! In spite of their smug, dutiful countenances they, too, have their bloated ego for companionship. They must find a reward somewhere for their self-slaughter. So intoxicated do they become in their self-adulations, so hysterically happy are these beings with their flagellant rites that they seek to impose their beatification on others. So they invented Christ and pass "Christian laws."

Humanity cannot escape its origins; it admires force more than "goodness." It will applaud power unallied to moral principles, but never moral principles unallied to power. It loves the bold, though the bold be "bad."

Only in the fury of excess does one catch glimpses of the immortal truths. Ah! the divine excess in great things—the excess that shot Mont Blanc toward the stars, the excess of life-force that sent Byron flaming through Europe, the excess that flung Verlaine into the gutter! They who keep the balances live long—and see nothing.

No two men's environments are the same because no two men's mental states are the same. Environment is a series of mental

states superposed on a hypothetical world. Environment is not "the sum of the forces which surround you," but the sum of the illusions which fire your brain.

All suffering is caused by an obstacle in the path of a force. See that you are not your own obstacle.

All willing is not necessarily a willing into fuller life, but it is invariably a willing away from death. Man gives little thought to his destination so long as he can remain out of reach of his Pursuer.

The right to live has never been proved except by the murderer and the thief.

There are countless reasons, no doubt, why we should not be evil, but it is impossible to think of a single rational reason why we should be "good." "Goodness" does not necessarily bring health, wealth, wisdom or peace of mind. Rather is it a smiling martyrdom.

The joy of the savage who has slain his enemies, the joy of the ascetic-saint who has slain his instinctive nature are both derived from the same source, the pleasure of *putting something to death.*

If all Christians were like Christ there would be no necessity for Christianity; for

when once we have achieved absolutely and in every particular our object, our passion, our dream, the motives that urged us on to that consummation disappear, and we are left in exactly the same predicament from which we wriggled. There is no Utopia that would be worth living in for a single month. Unless you are prepared for pain, prepared to kill, skirt precipices and be killed, you will always remain a decadent, i. e., an idealist, a sick man.

The Christian "Kingdom of God," where the weak, the stunted, the underfed and the outcasts shall riot and roister and gorge and swill and blaspheme at the strong earth-man singing his deathless war-chant in the hell-pits of strife!

There is no rising from lower to higher in social systems—there is only a constant redistribution of mediocrity, a thinning or a thickening of the crust beneath which glows the passion for liberty.

When society no longer exists for the welfare of the individual both must go, but the individual will be the last to disappear because he was the first to appear. Hence to live for others to the exclusion of self tends to the annihilation of both. But to

live for self to the exclusion of others does not necessarily tend to the annihilation of both the individual and society, for it is easier to conceive of the existence of a single individual without society than it is to conceive of society without a single individual.

Wherever "justice" has righted a wrong it has wronged a right.

The social system is maintained by opposing one vice to another; it is a balance maintained by bogus weights. The aggressive instincts of the individual are held in check by the threatened aggression of many individuals.

THE INTANGIBLE LIFE

LIFE is a manifestation of unconscious ideas, a flowerlike exfoliation from an unseen, unknown within to a visible, known without, of which death is the rim.

The mind, the earlier mind, of man, half opened, as a flower just before dawn, beholding, fearing, this rim—this almost tangible cessation of the activities of the beloved body—reacts upon itself in thought, seeking blindly for something of the infinite beyond matter; dreaming thus of gaining for mental, spiritual intensity what so soon must be lost in space and time; asking, as it were, a concession from Fate by a steady withdrawal from participation in her more obvious empire, the external world.

So is the dream born; and from the unmapped territories in the atoms in the brain there springs a being within a being—the imaginative-prophetic soul, forerunner of

the Intangible Life, the subverter and sapper of the external world, a thing that shall function in the limitless.

To beings so elected—few and unique among those who live literally, the mud-worms—the nearest thing is the remotest thing. They are never quite socketted in their environment, never quite come into contact with their own bodies. Extension, encounter and impact of bodily things are not true for them. They stand with one hand upon the door-bolt, about to go forth from their enchanted souls into the grooves of practical life; but they never make the motion that is decisive. Merely they stand there to listen apperceptively, or they peer through the knot-hole of sense at the elaborate rituals of buffoonery.

Standing farther away from life, they stand nearer to that which gives life; moving not anywhere, they are everywhere. They are never real in the sense that a wall is real, being at most mere effigies of flesh and blood leashed to a Vision.

They have for environment all that is conceivable, all that is scooped into the nets of imagination and intelligence from the abysses of the unsounded inland sea—things

strange, things chastened by ages of immobility and deep-sea lave, residue of lost worlds, and things still alive reaching through the tangled treasure of the soul hands that grip, forcing through to the day the short, agonized utterance of the baffled. And, in rarer moments, they are environed by the inconceivable—by those bare hints that are the souls of the great unuttered poems, and by those stranger epiphanies that amaze, illuminate and destroy sense's last belief in sense.

One may pick the world apart, pick it to its last shred of matter; but it is precisely here that life—the inexplicable, unanalyzable, intangible roots of matter—begins, and the scalpel must abdicate in favor of the imagination, the winged intelligence.

Imagination is a spurt from the depths of Being, a swirling geyser that gravitates to a zenith set in the infinite.

Memory cannot take us beyond ourselves, cannot carry us further than the experiences of our special form of existence; it moves in limits always. But in the mystic imagination will be found the fragmentary records of pasts long swallowed up, the

shining dust of worlds crumbled beyond possibility of reintegration, the whirling, blazing meteoric stones flung from the wrecks of incalculably remote selves.

Some golden minute overlooked in Time's monstrous hour, a miraculous survival in the impersonal memory of a wonder-time, ungarnered of Oblivion: such magical visitors come to the bedside of the ever-dying body! For the Eternal Dreamer, which is the soul of man, never dies, though dreams themselves are made of perishables.

We dreamed as impulse and desire in our parents and are lured into our bodies by vague imaginings, urged from husk to husk by the impetus of Karma, the spirits of accumulated past acts. Whatever one dreams tends to beget a body, and what we are now is old dream come to be the phantasm of place, ancestral imagination turned brain and sinew and blood.

The divinizing imagination can detach itself from this present crucible wherein it flows for a day and plunge into that ageless past, circumventing the shameful quickness of life, superposing on the sullen mystery of death the greater miracle of continuity through perpetual effacement.

Inundating me, I am back-rendered to the things I was, fore-rendered to the things I must be, resolving in a single eye-shot my marvellous complexities into their simples; beholding in this vile impulse the ravin of some old fatality: recognizing in this immedicable wound in the soul the work of the Avenger who seeks out the unbalanced and the impenitent—the old wolf with shining tooth who prowls and whelps forever in the souls of us!

Imagination is thus the menstruum of all materials, and the poet in his contemplations gathers up this world in his brain as one gathers waters in the hand. It was Alexander who sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Had he been a devotee of the Intangible Life he would have wept because he could not conquer all the worlds he saw.

Only the poet can track Time back to its source, only the mystic is permitted to step out of space or to lift the veil of the uncircumstanced, where images fail, but imagination still leads, where the guess is the only certainty, where logic is nursery block-building. He is the live king in the catacombs of matter; the mummy that has

split its wrappings and wings away. He dislodges, disturbs, seeing in Law merely the method of miracles.

Not where I am, but where I dream—there am I.

When the sword is absent from the sheath what matter where the sheath dangles?

My body may be beside you, but I may not be there—nor anywhere where that body could follow. All our troubles come from standing too close to our skins. The sword becomes bitten by the acids that corrode the scabbard. Sorrow is often only an error of vision.

Imagination is a form of hunger. Animals have little imagination because they are easily satisfied—food and sexual gratification are all they require. The most powerful imaginations are found in the unhappy. Poverty drives genius to the Intangible Life or brigandage. All great imaginative art is a transcript of world-sorrow, a record of things imperfect. All art is a record of the Intangible Life, a confession of the inadequacy of action. Nature has, in the intellect of man, bred her foe. She has in her blind willing willed her doom. There is always a tendency in the intellec-

tual mind to reject the things of sense, or to use them merely to further the ends of understanding. And the more the brain understands the less the body lusts.

The intellect is religious: it demands a rational universe. No end that is merely a rebeginning can be a rational end.

The imagination—the eye of the intellect—strains its orbs in search of another kind of eternity than that in which we lie quite helpless. And on her retina there is a tiny shadow of the Reality.

Certain beings there are who seem to be doing a work in some other sphere, to be occupied elsewhere, to be mere shadowy visitants of earth, looking on things about them as clumsy forgeries of something divinely writ—writ on other and finer parchments than stone and earth and wave. That feeling of walking in a "world unrealized" is no poetic myth, but the actual daily experience of a type of mind not so rare as most believe. It is direct contact with Reality, the everlasting mood of the Unchangeable.

It is the secret of the Intangible Life, this contact with the great scene-shifter;

and perpetual melancholy is given for its birthmark.

The agony of those on whom has fallen the Infinite! of those doomed to sit up to their eyes in the brack of this world and to feel that above the eyes they are bathed by the waters that flow nowhither from out the nowhere. These centaurs of the mud and of the azure cannot take the common part, yet they cannot reject it wholly. Cakes and ale and the hair-shirt they spurn; cakes and ale and the hair-shirt are theirs still. Their brooding, wistful faces peer across the sills of the House of Revels and they pass on, unallied, aliens beneath an alien sun. To them the shoulders of Time seem overweighted, forever and forever holding up this accumulating burden of evil, this daily increment of deed and dream, this perpetual transference of today's burdens to the shoulders of endless reluctant tomorrows.

The abstract mind, with its dower of imaginative sight, swallows up all its impulses toward practical life. Why should a man do anything when all that is done changes in the doing? Our own motions generate the cataracts that carry us to-

ward life. The whole universe changes in the moment of contemplation. There is a dying and a resurrection of each thing and all things each second. Into that bottomless sea of the Infinite there tumble all stars, all peoples, all pleasant ways, all bitter memories, all sub-human and superhuman compounds, all the organized shadows which we call *things*.

The being gnawed by this monstrous, invisible super-concept is something of a god. There is no rest for him night or day: come spring, come autumn; come birth, come death—it is all to him as though it were not. For over and under and round about he sees, like the Ancient Mariner, Life-in-Death and Death-in-Life, and things visit his ear dully and life slides by like distant shores seen through a tropic haze—himself caught in the débris, half of him gravitating toward the Viewless, the other half full socketted in matter.

Matter! There are those who have done away with that clog. If one stay long enough with inorganic, inanimate things, concentrate his thought on their inertness, their deadly calm, one becomes curiously aware of something bordering on semi-

intelligible expectancy in their attitudes. The table, bed, chair in a room, under this mental surveillance, will become half-create. These dumb things, somehow, assume an air of questioning watchfulness—as of embryons about to receive the spark that will stir their limbs and engender movement. Motion and rest seem one thing, and the Reality underlying each comes out stark.

Mind and matter are one thing operating in two ways under one primal impulse—the impulse of appetite. There is a passion of change in matter, and one of the results of this passion has been the production of mind. Matter is the subsidence of passion, mind in the gross state.

If it were not for the principle of decay—that is, the principle of evanescing change—we should be able to see a tree become a man in the evolutionary series before our very eyes and the solidest boulder transform itself into a crying baby.

It was with this knowledge that Walt Whitman apostrophised a tree as "Thou untold life of me!" No man's life is long enough nor his instruments of perception keen enough to behold this translation. The

imagination alone conceives it and knows that it is so. The passion of Pygmalion made of the statue of Galatea a breathing, living woman. The legend is eternally true. The living are the dead made manifest; and the so-called dead are the living unmanifest.

Every word we utter is but the utterance of a drowsy phantom in our blood, the opening of the lips of a spectre. For this reason in rare moments of self-consciousness our voice sounds strange, far away, not ours. It is the sudden perception of that great truth: *We are not ourselves.*

The human soul, the Eternal Substance, is the immortal Spectator and placid Observer of the endless recurrence of its own shadows. Thought is the endless recurrence of its dreams; movement the endless recurrence of its method. At the end of unimaginably vast cycles of time the Soul swallows its own consciousness and draws back into itself its shadows, which we call matter; its dreams, which we call thought; its method, which we call motion. And all that was lies dormant in the Nought, a possibility of Nothing. It is the Sabbath of works and days. The Eternal Substance

lives as a desire, and shadows and dreams and motion are born again, and the endless bitter burdens are taken up once more.

The native interior sense, the quick apprehension of the soul of things, some sudden rebirth in the brain of knowledge that had long lain dormant—this is the most marvellous of human possessions. He who has it in large measure may skip all learning, for he has wisdom; and wisdom is the instinct for values—a lightning in the soul that strikes the husk of illusion from the kernel of eternality and lays bare the essential.

The deepest wisdom has nothing to do with facts, with accuracy, with proof, corroboration. Wisdom is the Fact. It is the gift of the Intangible Life.

THE IRONY OF NEGATIVES

TO wish for the fulfilment of your desire—that is childish. To fear the fulfilment of your desire—that is the beginning of spiritual senility. To desire not to desire—that is wisdom.

All great negations are at last splendid affirmations. We renounce by desiring not to have, and to say, "I refrain" is really to say, "I will not to will." This is the humor of all great refusals. We reject the pennies because we covet the gold pieces, and spurn brown bread for the manna that may fall to us. There is a latent Yea in each great Nay.

Absolute renunciations cannot be conceived. We forsake the worse for the better, the gutter for the stars, counterfeit days for real days, the senses for the supersenuous. The dominating instinct can only be overcome by a dominating instinct. We are the gibes of an eternal Will. Turn wheresoever we may we cannot escape it.

When we give it battle we are most its bondman. It smiles back at us from the end of our swords, and when we flee from it, it is both pursuer and pursued.

The militant renunciants, from the Buddha to Schopenhauer, have been the founders of powerful movements—powerful negations, if one likes—strenuous nays. These flesh-walled prisons were too narrow for the mighty lusts of their souls; this spinning green pebble was too small a stage for their spirit-strut. They counselled renunciation here for a mightier life "elsewhere." They would lay waste the temporal order with the flaming fagots of their dreams, let loose the thirst-parched hounds of endless desire from their kennels of clay, rip the mask from the minute, drain eternity of its secrets, and plant their streamers of affirmation on the last cosmic ruin. Renunciation! There is no such thing. No is a transfigured Yes. Renunciations are the cocoons in which the delicate silk of our finer desires is spun.

The process of evolution, the whole of that marvellous exfoliation from the amœba to Thomas Hardy, is a process of "renunciation," a progressive leaving behind, a

sloughing off, an endless denial, an eternal series of terminations that are beginnings, and beginnings that are only valuable because they record terminations. The universe is eternally dying in order to live. We give up what we must when we must. A deeper necessity than our likes and dislikes commands. We flower in pain. We are exiles forever on the march to a Siberia whose terrors are purely imaginative.

All thought is action renounced. The elaborated brain of a Newton, the burrowing mental eye of a Shakespeare, the flame-crowned dreams of a Keats—all record the inbreedings of the spirit. The finer, the higher life begins with a veto. Each new law repeals an old one, and when we have discovered the illusiveness of days we resolutely cancel the world in contemplation, and "renounce" our hobbyhorses for Pegasus.

Action is characteristic of life on the instinctive plane. A will-less inaction can be reached only by the few. The centers of inhibition develop late in life. With our hand on that switchboard we may wreck with a smile the blind, plunging impulses. The iron-heeled spirit listens with pride

to the crackling of the bones of dead selves over which it stalks in grim-humorous defiance—those selves of a million yeas; those luring, seductive selves tricked out in a million guises, that solicit him by night, by day—selves born of a myriad lapses in a myriad lives.

Procession, concession, recession—the defiant "Forward!" "Forward!" of youth, the compromises of half-disillusioned middle life; the "peccavi!" of old age—that is the psychical history of the average being—the average being who only learns that life is pure hallucination after going through the horrors, who has no organ of divination, who does not believe in sewage until he has swum through a sewer. He renounces when there is nothing left to renounce. He confounds renunciation with death. And Tolstoi is his prophet.

How few have learned the art of withdrawing from life noiselessly and yet with dignity! On a day you have discovered the mockery of it all; some curious and swiftly knit suspicion has given you courage to rip the wrappings from your universe, and you behold where you thought to find God—bah!—a Cagliostro! You announce from the

market place your discovery. A million voices hiss in your ear "Traitor!" The totter-kneed gods on their pasteboard thrones crack their whips at you. But they avail not. You have become the spirit of revolt and you will lay the world in the dust. You have seen the core of creation and the vacuity thereof. You have beheld as in a vision the sinister Soul of things and the grin thereon; and you strike back in blind rage at the lies sacrosanct with age that enmesh you.

Your rage is useless, admirable, asinine. Spinoza glanced at the bill-of-fare, threw it out of the window and took to lens-grinding. Quit the stews without noise; thus only may one keep the beasts off his trail.

Tomorrow, that million-spired mirage-city toward which the soul of man forever wends its way; Tomorrow, with myrrh and spice in her casket, her fingers tipped with healing ointment for the wounds inflicted by this unromantic, calendared today—Tomorrow can be won only by wooing Today. How few can renounce the next Now! Yet that way alone lies wisdom. We live between-times, and nothing is. We are noctambulists forever stepping off into space.

We live between the minutes, in the mythic state that separates and yet unites a here and beyond. We never quite touch our objects, never close wholly the hand on the object of our desire. Always the essential escapes—the essence flies just above our heads. The St. Elmo fire of perpetual illusion flits around us, and we are our own undoing.

We seek for a spirit of rationality in things and do not find it because the seeking is itself irrational. Renounce the pursuit of things and those things will glide silently into your soul. Seek not and ye shall find: Let us dig where we stand—there is gold under our feet; the future is a pocket, and the fine glint on the outposts of things is but the phosphorescent reflection from the corpses of dead pasts on a vacuous perspective.

There is a fine irony embedded in the spectacle of this unending chase through fen and forest: bloodhounds on the scent of eagles and butterflies; arrows, poison tipped, sent hurtling after fireflies; vast armies accoutred to the knees, making forced marches to reach Cockayne.

Ring, Olympus, with thy eternal laugh-

ter! for the solemnity of man is the comedy of the gods!

The born renunciant's elaborated apparatus of inhibition is a labor-saving device. He skips the living of life in order to attain a life that lives. It is not necessary to experience in order to know. Some souls hold the universe in solution at birth. Their lives are excursions of verification. They inventory the universe at a glance and divert their lusts toward the stars. Thrust into Eternity's Black Hole with its three dimensions of Time, Space and Circumstance, they disdain the wall-feeling, wall-pounding and clamoring of their fellow-prisoners. Instead they fix their eyes on the white splendor of the dome—and wait. The Keepers find their bodies rigid in calm, a placid mock upon their faces. Amid the babel their souls have passed out through the little wicket in the great white dome—passed into—well, what matter?

Life is a lewd game of tag played by I Want and Catch Me.

In the last analysis our acts are but the combustions of cells big with voids. And our dreams are inbreedings—the obscene junctions of impotent potentialities. Under-

standing is the organ wherewith we finally comprehend that nothing is. Discrimination is that fine sense that places the dead fish in one pile and the maggots that feed on them in another. The passions are brewed in the cardiac vats and their steam singes and scorches the body with their senseless urgings.

Life! a butchers' picnic in the Alhambra; a column-cracked, half-foundered Venice; a vermin-ridden Arcady.

Those fine young seers, "the predestined," who walk out of the gates of birth and with swift and sure step dart to the center of the banquet-room and overturn the grub-table without tasting the edible junk have abridged their lives, it is true, but what they have missed they shall never feel the need of. They might have eaten, you say, and then judged. Satiety is the hog's judgment. Renunciation ex post facto is fashionable; besides, there are so many spiritual Baden-Badens where one may have his maw washed clean. Real renunciants are born, not tolstoied.

The Intellect is the mirror of Passion. She looks into that wondrous glass and murmurs: "The same—yet I cannot touch

thee. You are my higher self shaped as a face in smoke. I gave thee birth; you follow me; antic me and are my slave—my pale and wondrous slave, as ethereal as I am gross; my slave to whose beauty I render thy shackles." Intellect, forged in the foundries of desire, that is destined to strike down the arm that poured it molten in the brain matrices and gouge out the eye that watched it cool to undestanding. It is the Moses born amid the bulrushes and tangled weeds of elemental passion—this mighty Moses, light-smitten with Horebic visions, bringing to the groundlings who will listen a new tablet of laws.

Every fine action implies or characterizes some aspect of self-conquest, which is another name for renunciation. Every fine action is such because, fundamentally, it is a negation; some door must be shut before we open another. Life opens outward to an inward. "I have gained on myself," murmurs the dreamer when he feels the life energies boiling within him, and with the sure hand of him who controls the powers generated by Niagara Falls he directs those energies into the channels mapped out on the dream parchment of his mind. None

but those who have experienced it know of that virile joy, that bounding rapture, of the spirit that deliberately smiles a defiant no to some old lure, some petty, transitory tickle, and hears in his ear the long halloa! of congratulation from somewhere up the heights.

There is nothing in the world that is not worth having, but there is nothing in the world that is worth lifting the hand to obtain. We pay too much for our prizes; we are the eternal dupes of the imagination. An Epicurean receptivity, the desire to know, to feel, to assimilate all things—with a semi-humorous reservation as to the value of the things received; a keen discernment of the prankishness that reigns at the heart of things; the ability to outlaw what you cannot get; a looking without a lusting, or to lust with one's hand on the valve; an alien attitude toward joy, so when she comes it is with the surprise of unexpected good news—something of calm, some measure of surcease from the terror of days may be won in thus fronting life.

Man makes of his will the measure of his demands. The dream versus the brutal fact!—the theme of the finest tragedy and

comedy. What incongruity!—a Hottentot marooned on an iceberg, or an Esquimau gravely assuring himself that the desert is frigid. Man is capable of believing anything but the truth. Adaptability is the process by which one gets used to the uselessness of things.

The intellectual renunciant, the pure sceptic who has minimized the personal equation in his quest for rationality (which is, again, some principle that will coddle a temperamental bias) assumes all truths to be lies and all lies aspects of some truth. His universal premise is the denial of all premises—each premise being but the termination of some anterior syllogism. But he has faith: he assumes chaos. He rips from himself all the tatters of mental custom and aims at an oversight. His is what Nietzsche contemptuously called "the immaculate perception." The contradictoriness of things lies open to his vision. Impact, shudder, dispersion, recombination in endless forms new and strange; this is his ultimate formula, and beyond—the Black Panel. What "highest" shall he choose in this flowing frustration? In an evanescing universe what shall he waylay that will give

him more satisfaction than himself? He turns within and chants with Walt Whitman, "Me imperturbe." So he stands at pause at the cross-roads, and life swirls in and out of these highways at his feet. He takes no road. The view is finer from the forks. Besides, he has his secret.

HISTORY

THE pomp of many mythical yesterdays—that is history. History must be lived; it cannot be written. All the paper in the world could not contain the events of a minute.

As all the events of the past are saturated with the imagination, written history is the annal of man's illusions. The past is the one thing we create at each minute. It is the one thing that is revocable. It is the one thing we can create in our own image. There are as many Luthers, as many Napoleons, as many Robespierres as there are minds that think of them. The battle of Waterloo is no more important than you believe it is. Cromwell was a murderer or a saint—you are the judge. There are no facts; there are only beliefs. There is no past; there is only the kaleidoscope of the imagination. There is no history; there is only myth.

In that back-travelling glance the trivial

becomes grandiose; the stupendous is rounded off with the reservations of criticism. And this stained-glass hero who today stands all a-glitter in the magic of my thought tomorrow I shall hurl into the ditch of disillusion and cover with the quicklime of venomous ridicule.

"Have you read history?" Some one once asked me. "No," I replied. "I have never even read historians."

Tell me the secret of the violet and I will tell you the secret of God, a poet said. Tell me the secret of this minute and I will tell you the secret of all minutes. And until you can tell me what that event means which you call yourself I can tell you nothing of the meaning of history. I do not know that I am not a myth. So what can I affirm of Cæsar? Livy and Tacitus, Gibbon and Carlyle reported their own dreams, analyzed their own imaginations and wrote down themselves. The only archives from which they drew treasures were the countless cells in the brain, and their Messalinas and Hannibals and Mirabeaus are as purely mythical as the Homeric gods.

The hot, steaming imagination throws

off its moons which it calls its "facts." Grote had an idea, and that idea had an echo, and he called it Greece. Is there a history of England? No. There are Hallam's England, and Green's England, and Macaulay's England.

Each man is the conscript of his temperament. We know the lying mask that Memory draws over the face of each particular yesterday. And those infinite faded yesterdays! Who shall unmask them shall write history! They are the monstrous pillars that stretch away into the Infinite, each crowned with its separate Sphinx, each with its separate riddle, each veined with countless hieroglyphics.

History is not fascinating, and indeed has no reason for being, until some supremely great poetic liar—a Shakespeare, a Hugo, or a Dumas—recreates it for us; or until some seer blows into its body a fictitious soul which he calls a philosophic theory. The historian must have a migratory imagination. He puts clothes on ghosts. He is the tailor of dead men. The past is his clinic and he demonstrates over his own Frankensteins.

History is, then, like the visible universe

itself, a fable of the imagination. What I see there is there. To me it is merely an excuse for setting down some thoughts on the evolution of man.

All events from the first appearance of man on the planet to the writing of these words constitute an Iliad of ghastly jests. Man is the anonymous atom. He is one of the masks of the Supernatural. The aspirations of races are born in Venetian pomp. They all end in a Verdun. That is the satiric repartee of our Antagonist hidden behind the arras. The history of a particular race is merely that race's ante-mortem statement to posterity, which holds an autopsy on its ancestor, and starts to write its own ante-mortem statement.

The history of mankind! Listen!—and you shall hear the forlorn music made by drowsy Ghosts on violins of bronze.

History has a metaphysic. It is the will-to-persist. The will-to-persist must not be confused with the will-to-power of Nietzsche or the will-to-live of Schopenhauer. It includes both of these. It uses life and power in order to persist.

The race denies death. The evolution

of man is the epic of Persistence. The spirit reaches out for a Beyond at each of its movements. To be Other, to be Elsewhere, to be in the place where one is not—that is the primal instinct.

Not to be is the only hell man ever feared. Not to move is the only monstrous thought that can be thought. Not to persist is the only blasphemy that repels him. And all the torment of existence flows from this will-to-persist, this inexplicable need of going—on. Lashed, branded, stoned, bludgeoned, kicked and cuffed from hell to hell, spat upon by nature, vomited back into life from out the ground where he is laid, man fears but one thing: Boredom—the boredom of eternal extinction. And the knick-knack Gods and the sublime gibberish of prayer and that vulgar scuffle from territory to territory which is called the "march of progress" are nothing but the rumble and rattle of the Will-to-Persist.

The history of the nations is the search for Utopia. The millennium is imminent—just ahead. Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, Japan, America—so many multiples of the besetting, parasitic illusion of Man. The

sacred scroll containing that eternal promise in jewelled letters unfolds before the march of tribes and peoples. The New Jerusalem is by the Tiber, on the Mississippi, on the Rhine, on the Nile.

Into the fastnesses of their dreams there never comes a prowling doubt. Each people is the chosen people. The Capitol is the Ark of the Covenant. Sidon, Tyre, Alexandria, Athens, Rome, Paris, London, Washington are the shining Ararats where the tempest-tossed shall lodge in peace at last!

History is, again, a museum of cant phrases. Each nation, each people, has its sacred syllable Om, which it repeats in ecstasy. They are the aphrodisiacs of national ideals. Ah, the sublime pneumatic catchwords that keep the masses bowed and allow the preachers of "our manifest destiny" to ride them pickaback!

Each generation stands waiting the apocalyptic formula, which it fingers like a favorite pimple. No great movement is legitimate until a motto is stitched into the minds of the masses.

"Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,"

"Taxation without representation is tyranny," "Remember the Maine," "For God and Fatherland," "The Brotherhood of Man," "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "Making the world safe for democracy," these are a few decoy cries of the Ideal, the eternal blood-sucker, the unsurfeited vampire that no atom is too small to conceal and no constellation large enough for its traffic.

Give me a phrase and I will create motion in dead masses. Give me a warcry and I will invent a war. Give me an emblem and I will lead a people. Give me a device and I will overturn dynasties. With what mighty blustering epigram did Lucifer draw the rebellious hosts up before the face of God? The Reformation began when Luther tacked ninety-five phrases on a Wittenberg church-door. The millions who have fallen in battle from Salamis to Château-Thierry fell to perpetuate maxims, and those who survived were decorated with medals and lived forever after in the effulgent light of their favorite saw.

There is nothing more sentimental than war. History is all sentiment. To "create new values" a lie is necessary—a senti-

mental lie, a lie that shall be strong enough to found kingdoms and cathedrals, lazarettos and pension lists, inquisitions and Reigns of Terror. It must be strong enough to justify the paranoia of a Joan of Arc, the epilepsy of a Cæsar, the sadism of a Robespierre, the sublime mania of a Napoleon, the pride of a Kaiser, the religious fervor of a Charles the Ninth. The eternal cant phrase! Thy will be done here below and may thy monstrous charnel houses top Arcturus!

The socialists are right when they say the fundamental question is the economic question. In history the whimper of the belly dominates. In all uprisings the bakeries are sacked first. The pinched visage of Hunger overawes the world. Food is the only God who has never been blasphemed. There are no atheists to confront *him.*

Man can live by bread alone. God, patriotism, love, religion may be spurious. Hunger is real. Hunger is a fang. Thirst is a thug. The billions who have come out of the earth and have gone into it were all bellywise. Kings and Popes fear the

mutinies of the Belly beyond the wrath of God. When the people in Rome became restive the public granaries were opened. Behind all the hubbub of the world, behind the purple and the cloth, behind the cataclysms of history, behind the mouthings of the jingo gods of the masses, behind all the painted scenery of civilization and barbarism there stands the eternal breadline. It is the skeleton in the closet. It is the abominable Fact. It is the Banquo's ghost at the feast of the masters.

History knows one Superman: it is Lazarus. Against the animosity of the empty stomach Reason, Logic and Commonsense are mute. It justifies every crime. The hollow stomach is seditious. It is apostate to every religious, social and ethical dogma. It is Anarch and Atheist. All history plays satellite to Stomach.

In the beginning was the Belly, and the Belly was with man, and the Belly was man.

The masses! the masses! That mighty strangled sigh that goes into the infinite! The trillion-eyed being who sees nothing, whose life is nothing, who is just the Mass!

They manure the glory of the great. They drag the chariots of Charlemagne and Cæsar and Napoleon into the empyrean and fall back into gaping graves below.

I have watched from a star stricken with ague—a star that was old at the birth of man on the earth—the hordes that have lived here in this world. A meaningless generation. A useless fecundity. A buffoonery of nature. A flood of sap. The stench of an enormous iniquity. Will the earth never cease belching! Behold the Infinite on parade! Behold the flaming geysers of life! The uncountable, inscrutable masses—pedestals of flesh and bone for the strong man—skulk back to oblivion, one crawling over the other ant-wise. The obscene, gluttonous, putrescent trillions—the eruption of some eternal subhuman hell.

The masses are the paid panders of those notorious blackguards called great men. Their great men are their Cloaca Maxima. They are the incarnations of their criminal instincts, the clearing houses of their hypocrisies.

The masses without their heroes! Inconceivable. The average man in every age

has always been naturally a pimp. He is the parasitic suckling of "the man of the hour." His lips are forever sucking at the nipple of a demagogue. The stars sparkle, the seas surge and chant their magnificent litanies in his ears, the seasons blow their aromatic breaths into his face, cataracts of light falling from inconceivable heights lave his head—of this he sees nothing. He prefers to worship a Corsican blackguard, chant hosannahs to a spectacled monster born in Aix, or stand in mute adoration around the eloquent rump of his economic Kaiser.

And at last the masses arrive at Democracy! The divine right of kings has become the divine right of the masses. The crown has been taken from the head of the ass and glued on the head of the ape. We pass from an assocracy to an apeocracy. The slave of five hundred million years at last comes to sit on a latrine (which he mistakes for a throne). The meaning of the ages is at last promulged, the Sphinx gives up its secret, we have a clue to God, the atom discloses its reason-for-being, it is the ninth-month of historic gestation: the

masses are about to take possession of the planet.

Verily now the earth belongs to the people. But the stars still belong to the poets.

THE PASSION OF DISTANCE

SPACE is the original sin; distance is the mother of desire. Perspective lends wings to the soul—and sets us in the mud in amaze.

For we may not fly to that Alpine ridge —nor to that thought that beckons at the end of a mental perspective.

Alpine ridge and mental ridge are illusions of space, aerial promontories such as we see on the stage—paint, cardboard and grease; beautiful to behold, the parent of an aspiration, but treacherous to land on.

The pursuit of the spectres that inhabit distance brings us at last to the terror of the Infinite, to the monstrous, timeless thing we call Eternity.

All philosophy is the attempt to batter down walls, to shatter limitations, to reach that utter distance called the Supreme Generalization, where, if the adventurer has the real buccaneer blood in him, he

rests in eternal contemplation, fed forever by his immortal distance passion.

Or if his soul be not yet strong enough he flies, like Pascal, back a-trembling to the skirts of the concrete, brain-mangled, soul-shattered at what he has seen, seeking shelter in the pomps of the transitory.

Philosophers are idea-drunkards. Their heady abstractions—the rare vintages, as it were, of all the illusions that clamber over the deathless Spirit of Things, vine twisted around vine—make of them lords of the distances, abolishing as they do, for instance, the petty difference between an ant and a star, between summer and winter, between the first man and the last man.

It is Nature's great paradox of distance that a watery pulp like the brain—a mere thinking sponge that can be held in the palm of the hand—can hold within itself that stupendous conception of the evolution of man from protoplasm to what he is; can hold it not only in bits as scattered detail, but as one single idea, to be envisaged in a single flash of consciousness; an idea that in the drop of an eyelash destroys each individual existence and solves everything in a law that sets all beginning and end at de-

fiance, a law that requires an eternity of time in which to body forth the secrets of its deeps and uses infinite space as its mould.

Approaching the monstrous—is it not?—that that little globe perched so oddly on the shoulders of Arthur Schopenhauer should have secreted within its circumference that marvellous theory of the Will—a menstruum that before our very eyes vaporizes a late substantial universe and sets the mind a-rocking and a-reeling in the limitless. Sublime paradox indeed!—the paradox of paradoxes. For here the lesser holds the greater, the unlimited is found secreted in the limited, the infinite in a skull!

The Hindu seer travelling his upward Path rises from prospect to prospect with a rapt joy blazoned on his soul, indulging that passion of distance, that frenetic desire to be lost in the Infinite, to be hub to a million prospects, to be the vent of Time and Space.

The yogi is the divine intoxicant, an eater of form and matter. His hasheesh is distance; his ultimate the complete absorption of himself in a buoyant, spaceless, timeless, shelterless Nirvana, where dis-

tance has consumed distance, and where at last there remains only the extensionless Now.

Amiel, who like Pascal, was touched—one may only be touched by it to retain his sanity—by this passion for endlessness, was transfixed into a lifelong inaction.

The Infinite had petrified him. His passion for distance ended in a passion for death, an ineradicable longing to escape from the net of *this* and *that,* from the dull mummeries of change, the tawdry pageantry of earth.

The average person holds fast to the limited. The boundaries of the territory in which he strolls—for the average man never wanders—are as clearly marked out for him as the streets of his native town. He ambles through life the smiling prisoner of use-and-wont, chilled by the unfamiliar, the scarcely manumitted child of the cosmic nurseries. He travels unsuspectingly the well-worn grooves of sense, his mind seldom expanding beyond the tip of the nose or the nerve-centre of the longest finger. He feels well-housed, safe in the concrete, in the very real walls of his mental abode, surrounded by his imperishable

lares and penates—with his unchanging God of sundries in back of it all.

The thought never enters his mind that that which he most firmly clutches has no more reality than fountain spray, is, in fact, a kind of coarsened ether—an equilibration for a little while of imponderable force; that the object most familiar to him is nothing but an externalized state of consciousness, a thing of no-name really, only dubbed "tree" or "house" or "chair" or "woman" as a kind of makeshift for our unalterable ignorance.

Still, this stands—this Thing of no-name —in an infinite number of relations to an infinite number of other things, capable of an infinite number of destinies, with abysm on abysm beneath it and incommensurable distances ramifying in every direction from it.

And yet on a day—a day ticked off, maybe, on his mental calendar; or, not understanding, left slide by, hardly noted—this "average person," standing for a moment on a mountain top or casting a glance out to sea or unconcernedly tossing his eye deep into the blue illusion over his head, is aware of a swift inquiet, a sudden

arrest of being, a falling sensation such as he may have experienced in a nightmare. He has a vague glimpse of something that can only be described as the *Nothing-Everything*. Then he comes back in his body again, sound, safe, with a grip of death upon his world of thick cubes and gravitating chattels.

He does not know exactly what happened, but half-guesses that his soul had been shot some distance out of his body—or that his body had been suddenly shot from under his soul.

The absorptive, annihilating Infinite—abstract of all distances—had for an incalculably small space of time swept him away bag and baggage. The eye of his soul had caught for a moment on its retina a picture of the perdurable.

There are some faces that intoxicate us with the illimitable prospects they open up; faces that limn interstellar distances; far-away faces, space-hallucinated, object-blind—the forehead and eye recording so expressively the vertiginous flights of the soul.

Here, too, in these faces there is always a touch of the wistful, such a look as we

see on the faces of those who gaze expectantly out to sea the day long; a touch of nostalgia.

Be we ever so near to these beings they are still, we feel, so far away really that contact with them gives us back something of the uncanny.

They bear the air of one sent on a strange, perplexing errand by a malign god. They have about them a vague presage of the ultimate destiny of the soul, which seeks in each movement, however trivial, the secret of that last unification, that ultimate redemption within itself of all distances, the final reclamation of all horizons—and the meaning thereof.

THE COMIC VIEW

THE comic is Dissonance viewed from the Imperturbable. Life is a *contretemps*. Life is an encounter between I Would and Thou Shalt Not. Life is Mind out for a lark. Life is what you will, but the hiatus between what you will and what you do not get is the great motive for the humorous in art, literature and the magazines.

Spencer says laughter is caused by a "descending incongruity." In plain English, a "descending incongruity" is an unexpected tumble. Man describing a parabola as he slips up on the banana peel of Chance is the cause of that inextinguishable laughter that reverberates from Olympus to Broadway.

George Meredith tells us that the comic is the laughter of the Reason. And reason, he might have added, is the laughter of the Emotions.

The smile is the scintillant light that

sparkles on the tear. The comic is the tragic viewed from the wings. Humor is the tabasco sauce that gives life a flavor. It is mirth that keeps us sane.

The tragic is ridiculous because it has no sense of proportion. The Tragic View measures man against man. The Comic View measures man against the universe. One records the collisions of personality. The other records the impact of the mischievous molecule against the irrevocable.

The Tragic View is defective because it takes itself seriously and bombards eternity with its whimperings. The Comic View is perfect because it takes nothing seriously, chucks the menacing to devouring Time, and impales the Inevitable on a smile.

The Comic View is exhilarating. It mounts the barricades of limitation with a hop-skip-and-a-jump. It knows the value of all things. Science? Mere mumblings in a vacuum. Life? A parenthetical affirmative between two negatives. Honor? A bauble for idealists. Love? Vascular excitation. Morality? A clever device of the first impostor—the State. Tra-la!

Hoop-la! Hold up your paper hoops, Master of Ceremonies, and see Merry-

andrew dive through them and slit them into shreds.

The Comic View is the cosmic view. The world of time and chance is meaningless. The Demiurge, the world-creator, is the Browning of celestial mechanics: style without ideas. The world is chaos dramatized. The earth is the Farnese torso among the scuptured planets. Life is a problem in contingencies. Nothing eventuates. Actions are webbed nothings spun by a Syncopated Spider. Time is a loafer playing at tenpins. And whether you drink, or sleep, or make wry faces at Demigorgon, or shy spitballs at Fate—it is all the same. You dissolve at last in fine smut.

So get the Cosmic-Comic View before you slough off and snuff out. Peep at yourself *en passant*. Look at your meaningless gyrations and silly circumvolutions from a perspective. Stop your sulking and come up to Pike's Peak. Sitting recumbent in your stews, you taint the air. Your disappointments are bacterial. You litter the things that devour you. Your sighs are miasmatic. Your liver has got in your eye and your heart in your boots. Get flush with the Spirit that abides.

The raucous guffaw of Rabelais reverberates to this day. The silvery rill of Cervantes—who dragged Prometheus from his rock and set him tilting at windmills—is Spain's immortal contribution to the Comic View. The dry smile of Molière lingers on French letters. The metallic chuckle of Mephisto—I believe it was his chuckle that saved Faust! And even the sardonic grin of Aristophanes is as broad today as it was when it first split his face.

These are the wondrous mirrors that image the human *contretemps* and flash back our calamitous comicalities. Here mankind is skewered on the poignant wit of genius. Could we read Balzac at a single sitting the best of us would forever renounce life. How grotesque are our days! How aimless our actions! How petty our passions! The "Comédie Humaine" is a picture of a huge animal chasing its tail.

Louis Lambert mistook the cataleptic trance for the Kingdom of Heaven! Père Goriot gave up all for love and died of starvation! Old Grandet desired gold and wallowed in it; his daughter Eugènie desired love and died a pallid virgin. And yet Lowell says, "God may be had for the

asking!" Balzac knew better: It is the gods who may be had for the asking.

Man darts out of negation and begins to scratch the ground like a chicken out of the egg. With what care he builds the house of life! With what seriousness and pride he goes about his daily tasks! He begins each day at exactly the same place he began the day before. But being serious, he lacks omniscience. He builds as though it were for eternity, as though Death—the joker in the stacked pack—did not lie in wait for him. His house is suspended in air, and for every brick he puts on the edifice a brick at the bottom drops silently into space. He is a mechanical figure moving on a grooved stage between the right wing of Despair and the left wing of Ennui. His spiritual tympanum has been destroyed in the great Boiler Factory. Else he would renounce and smile.

To reach the comic height you traverse the Valley of the Shadow. The Country of the White Lights is reached only through the Land of Ultra-Violet Despairs. You first wander through the pits of implacable negations and beneath sickly, pitted suns, and keep tryst with Succubus.

The pinnacle of the ludicrous is attained only after having won all sorts of nasty opinions of yourself. The little peeping double on high is evolved in travail. In early life our theories of personality are geocentric and our social universe is Ptolemaic. On our dear tear-mildewed souls we mirror the earth and the fatness thereof. Everything revolves around us. The Self is garbed as Hamlet. What eyes behold us! How our every action is recorded! We manufacture utterly absurd moral systems that we imagine others think we ought to live up to. We shed oceans of tears because ourself doesn't like ourself. The very stars we believe to be spy-glasses pointed straight at our mewling and puking souls. Oh, the agonies of the self-conscious—the parturition of self from self! Ego, like protozoon, multiplies by fission. Each new thought is born with the evil eye.

But sudden on a day the black garb is doffed—we know not how. Tears cease to flow, and the sob ends in a squeak. We are aware of a synthesis, an amalgamation, a blending as of many waters.

It is the miracle of perspective. What was all this pother about? Who is this

blubberer? I turn aside, watch myself come and go, and now smile indulgently at my antics. Funny little fellow, you there—erst myself—with your labors and loves and mouthings! Hi, little fellow there, come amuse me; give me a jest or break a bottle with me; sing me a funny woe-begone serenade beneath Dolores' window; or let me see your funny little legs sprint to the tomb. Hey there, little mannikin that once I thought a giant Thor, what deviltry will you be up to tomorrow?

There is a wail in the night. A babe is crying for the moon. The wail has ceased; the babe has cried itself to sleep. This is often called renunciation. But the Comic Self on high smiles. He knows.

THE ARTIST

THE artist!

He garners the world in a dream, and lo! the dream is more real than reality; he touches the dead and they tremble back into life and are more vital than the merely galvanized beings that stare at you in the street; his brain is fecund of worlds, of real men and women, systems and great cosmic dramas.

What you see, what you feel is not real; only feeling and seeing and understanding are the immortal realities. The mind incorporates the world, and what the artist gives forth is Chaos transfigured, turmoil stilled in its frenzies, the old foolish gestures called action transfixed on an Idea.

The difference between art and life is the difference between reality and a mirror—art being the reality, life the mirror. Art is the reality because it is the exact record of what we feel and know, of what we aspire to be, of the ideal—hence real—

self-enactment. Life is only a faint reflection of our desires, and so the poet, the painter, the dreamer as men are ghosts, mere flesh-films; but their poems and their pictures and their abstractions are the highest reality. Our ideals and our instincts are our standards; and in a book, a poem, a picture, a statue, these ideals and instincts live to their fulness.

Life wakes only our caricatures; art wakes the spiritual protagonist complete, substantial, sempiternal.

Art takes life for its theme. Life has no theme. Practical life is aimless; it is the reel of a homeless, drunken man. It is detail, detail, detail, infinitely spread. Our acts are stop-gaps between moments of painful disillusion — mud-floundering at their best. The artistic spirit constructs ends; having attained them, it rests, a marbled, immortal contemplation. It dwells in an everlasting Now, and has the power to hallow smut and aureole the beast.

My vision! Who can take that from me? My impassioned dream that burst my brain-dikes and overflowed on to canvas, that forced the marble block to yield its curved secrets, or that flashed on paper as

a rhapsody—that is the *real* moment, over against which the seething caldron of mutilations we call the "great world" has only that validity for being that a fertilizer has.

The particular seen as a particular has no meaning. No man can understand anything until he thinks abstractly. The difference between the breed of slugs that move from point to point, from fact to fact, feeling their way like a snout along a dunghill, and the godlike apprehension of the great creative artist is not a difference in degree but a difference in kind of brain-stuff. The mental difference between the Black Fellow and the anthropoid ape is not as great as the mental difference between a plantation darky and Henry James.

Life is mean and petty to most people because they lack the artistic instinct. They see John and James, and they are commonplace. But read of John and James as Balzac saw them or a boor as Thomas Hardy saw him and the scales have fallen from your eyes. The finite has no longer any existence as such; the individual has ceased to be an individual: the man becomes a type; an abstraction made flesh—or breathing flesh become an abstraction;

an insulated force; a concourse of ideas; an entombed universe.

It is this exaltation of consciousness—this challenge to the commonplace, this war of the Idea on the tyranny of the senses that would cudgel the soul to an abject subservience—that constitutes the superiority of the art-instinct over the life-instinct. That which we touch too often is either destroyed by us or destroys us. The habitual kills wonder and familiarity slays awe. The Alps guide has no sense of the grandeur and mystery which surround him; the astronomer sweeps the constellations nightly with his telescope and soon he dwindles to an automatic calculating machine. And the crowds of the pavement have no eye for the sublime. Did not the sun and moon rise yesterday? And Venus in her brilliance is only "pretty."

Walt Whitman one day crossed over to Brooklyn on a ferryboat. Years after he wrote a poem called "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and all who now read that poem want to cross the river and see the sky, the boat, the gulls, the deck-hands as Old Walt saw them.

The great artist is a seer; he stands out-

side of the world. The human race fills in a perspective. The creative dreamer is sundered from environment—he is his own *milieu*—he is brain-light, detached cell-ecstasy. He beholds the endless procession into being from out of the womb of nonentity, and etherealizes God and diatom. The writhing, pain-gutted phantoms called men are the Epic of Evil, an epic of the artist's creation. He alone is likest God.

Whether we writhe in the straitjacket of pain or are solved in the radiant monotony of a transcendent Perfection; whether we have flouted all the seductive but vengeful sanctities in our effort to preserve the greater sanctity—self—whether we have challenged all the wooden deities of time and reviled the Arch-Bungler each day—these things which we have done or have not done are significant but seldom of practical importance. The creative intellect looks down upon himself and draws the essential facts out of its experiences and fashions them into images.

The artistic temperament is the philosophic temperament, and good and evil and the codified cant called the moralities are the clay with which the creative dreamer

works; they have no other use. If a "sin" yield me truth or beauty it is no longer a sin. But this privilege belongs only to the strong. Weakness is the prerogative of power — only the strong man can afford to transgress. Before he falls he knows he will be up again. He never loses his strength. The great soul—the self-centered artistic temperament—thrives on his poisons, because to him they are not poisons. He would not always be with the Highest because his Highest alone is sure. The transgressions of the weak have no ideality in them. The weak, in reality, never transgress; they merely lapse.

Nietzsche, Ibsen, D'Annunzio, Whitman! —four great storm petrels of the Inland Sea, workers in the Time-Mist, somber heralds of dawn—or night. Their dreams are sublime futilities, but dreams that swaddle us in an aura of godhood. Could the crowd grasp them, could the world enact in its drab, vulgar way the passion-glozed hallucinations that are blown from the skulls of these men, life would lose its flavor, ideal transgression its fascination, and evil and good their æsthetic value.

Only ideal transgressions are worth

while; action is comic. What the gods wish to destroy they first make real. Were we all Hamlets, Iagos and Lears no one would read Shakespeare.

Give us our immortal dreams, show us ourselves as we are not, give us the riot of our anarch minds; foil us, foil, us, eternally foil us, that we may dream again! Let the scavengers scrape the gutters for coppers and duck in the mud for dimes. They are the "Captains of Industry"—the grimy, smutty captains of the marts and their "industry" a grimy, smutty, lurid hell.

Philosophers are artists in ideas. They are the white heralds of the Great Release, eagles of the Infinite; they solve the iron thong of earthly limitations in a molten white idea, and walk not on terra firma. The creative philosopher seems in his highest flights to dam the eternal flux and in his widest generalizations to erase accident. In Time under protest, he stands equipped for eternity, and his calamities are his foods. The abstract mind flows into the matrices of the concrete and changes the shape of the moulds. It hoods itself under all forms, but is none of these. It is that which perceives, but is never perceiv-

able. It sucks from a world of illusive appearances the marrow of reality, and spits whole epochs of social movement upon the gleaming point of a generalization. The philosophic mind of the first order packs all of history, with its crescendos and decrescendos of joy and woe, its evanishings and recrudescences, under a single scalp, and finds in the perversities, aspirations, meannesses and cruelties of a single soul the history of mankind in action.

There lies in each soul a history of the universe; indeed, the soul of each is nothing but embryo and cadaver—the new springing from the old, life springing from death. Each impulse to action is a ghost seeking flesh again, some old dead ancestral self, scenting from its arterial prison-house its ancient loves. Within the recesses of your clay, mewed in brain-cell or aorta, there live Charlemagne, Christ, Peter the Hermit, Nero, Judas, St. Francis of Assisi and Shelley. Your temptations, your betrayals, your cruelties, your asceticisms, your penances, your will-to-power, your "cry for light," your lusts—that is history, and it needs not Gibbon in six ponderous tomes to tell me why Rome decayed. The poison

that killed Rome is in me, and the fate of America I can forecast in a study of my own strengths and weaknesses. The Law works everywhere. It is the one single reality. It is the immovable screen against which Time projects her endless shapes.

The commonest objects have this in common with the sublimest spectacles which nature or man offers: they are at bottom but phantoms of the brain, modes of cellular life. Children and geniuses bear on their faces a look of exalted wonder. That mingled expression of perplexity, awe, amazement on the face of a child when fingering a button on your coat differs only in degree from the feeling in the poet's soul when for the first time he sees Mont Blanc. The same feeling of wonder overcomes the philosopher when, step by step, he has tracked the variegated universe back to an impalpable, eternally persisting Force. A touch of the soul melts solids to fluids, and a flash of insight in the brain of man discovers to him the great cosmic cataracts—and we humans the perpetually evanescing débris on their surfaces.

We are travelling toward the zenith of Self, and all great art is a report of the

progress made. Action is only valuable because it engenders reaction; because it shocks the brain to thought and moulds the soul to pictured moods which seek expression. The shocks, the moods, the visions are real; the objects that caused them are brain data.

The world is my dream, but I the Dreamer am everlastingly, else I could not say "It is a dream."

UNDER A MASK

THE right to live implies theft. If you cannot take, you cannot live. Seizing and assimilating to one's needs the things that lie about us are primary notions. There is no law that sets a bound to any special manifestation of the law of acquisitiveness except another and opposing special manifestation of the same law. In organized society we pillage under prescribed conditions, plunder within limits; what we call social justice is merely the machinery by which we regulate theft.

The eternal combat waged between the House of Have and the House of Want—that is, between ability and inability—is the clash of gigantic forces which lie in the nature of things, so far as we know them. It is true, indeed, that the combatants drape their nakedness in all manner of gaudy apparel and that they fly beautiful home-made banners with little touch-and-go ethical mottoes; but these romantic trap-

pings please the stay-at-homes mostly—the drowsy Utopians, with their ideals of laziness which they, again, with that incurable idealizing instinct of theirs, nickname self-development.

"All property is robbery"—that is the reason why we hold all property to be sacred. What I possess I have wrested from some weaker being by superior strength or craft or subterfuge, or under the patronage of some legal lie. The effort involved, this final appropriation of a thing after a life-and-death struggle in which all the life-forces are engaged—this is what gives value to property and apotheosizes it in our eyes.

"All property is robbery"—that is absolutely true, but to say that robbery is an evil is false. Who will probe the subtleties of theft in organized society? Who dare trace his smallest possession to its beginnings? All the things we own are smeared with blood and tears, and our triumphal marches are over the skeletons of the lost. Each one takes what he must; each takes what he dares to take; he calls it the "self-preservative right," ignoring the implications of the phrase. For the right to pre-

serve one's self carries with it the right to slay and steal until the self be perfectly balanced with its own youthful dreams of well-being.

In the last analysis, all law and custom exist to safeguard and benefit the individual, who is the race-unit, the ultimate appraiser of all values. There is no such thing as "the common good," for there is no good common to all. "Perpetuity of the race" is inconceivable unless the well-being of the individual is conserved. Thus we have the paradox: Government, in the name of the "common good," destroying the units of which it is composed. Society is an abstraction that has got itself organized. It "safeguards" the rights of the individuals by taking away his rights and makes him "upright" by clamping him in a strait-jacket. Like most romantics, the State is totally devoid of humor.

Who bound me to follow "social ends"? Where did I precontract to labor and sweat for the "common good"?—to offend myself by feeding it with ill-smelling phrases when it sickens for a life that lives, a voyage against the stars, or into hell if so I please?

The ideal of good citizenship is the philosophy of servants. They pass and repass before themselves—the herd; they pass and repass before their heaven-created State like a fop before his mirror—admiring, smirking, titillating themselves with their own magnified image. Their slogan is Progress and their problem: How may we become smaller? Of growth they know nothing—growth, which is to pass beyond yourself, you the individual, you the isolated one. Leave the flock, outlaw yourself, you will be original and immoral; for all originality is "immoral."

The weak panoply themselves in codes and systems. It is their slowly evolved organ of defense against the strong—a species of vengeance, urged of course in the name of justice. How may I survive? asks the weak man. Organize the State and plunder the strong, whispers his conscience. All popular uprisings are attempts to impose upon the strong the very yoke which the weak are trying to cast off—the yoke of slavery. The slogan is always "justice"; the secret intent is revenge; the result is triumphant incapacity. The strong man's justice is always justice—that is,

three parts of the cloak for himself and the remaining part for the beggar. The weak man's justice is only equality—a phrase that corresponds to nothing but the letters that compose it.

Communities — cities, countries — what signify all these various forms of herding—this formal amalgamation of Custom's slaves—against extraordinary states of consciousness in a few chosen individuals? 'Till the seer and the prophet and teller of news comes, accoutred in rebel garb, life has no significance. Life is merely the irk of a long sombre day, a crouching in a dingy corner of the universe listening with bated breath to the long-reiterant menace of death, a parley with the unseen, eyeless ills crouching bellywise by our sides—'till the challenger comes, he who augments Fate with a larger destiny—and goes to his Calvary. Out of the commonplace rises the interpreter of the commonplace; forth from organized government comes the unorganized rebel.

The outlawed being may offend æsthetically, but he cannot offend morally; what he does may not be beautiful, but it cannot be wrong. He may bungle the scheme, be

clumsy and awkward, build himself unmathematically; but if he is sincere he cannot be wrong; self-fulfilment is the only moral law. The thing that I must do is always right. Evil treads the same path as goodness, but it goes further; it is the uncurbed, the unleashed, the uncalculating, and, always dazzling the imaginations of men, is worshipped as power under various guises; it even taking the garb of humility.

There are no bad men; there are only men who affect us badly; men who reject our way to felicity; who will have none of our blessed state. "Sweetness and light" are bitterness and darkness to a nature that finds delight in danger, war, depredation. Cain did boldly, in the full light of day, what Abel would probably have done from the thicket, for Abel was heaven's first sycophant; Cain, earth's first man who dared. Cain stood upon the dignity of his soul. Abel was the forerunner of those who perpetrated all the conceivable deviltries which the mob-soul is heir to for the "glory of God"—a justification which today steals among us under a new mask, "the welfare of the race." The criminal—so called—preys upon Society in the name

of his instincts; Society preys upon the criminal—so called—in the name of an abstraction. The State, once anointed of heaven, has now become the anointed of man, and those who were formerly of God are now the lobbyists of the Summum Bonum.

The strong man seeks out evil; the weak man is sought out by evil. The doctrine of evil for strength's sake, of rebellion for the soul's sake, is not for the domestic animal, nor yet for the jackal; nor may cripples become gymnasts nor kitten-eyes dart glances at the sun. At last, and always, the mob must have its footpaths. Few there are who dare walk the shifting surfaces of the Milky Way; few are born to voyage against the North Star.

Wreak your soul on Life. Use your powers. Never question whether they are moral. Once you put the question you are already weak.

And 'ware the sly Delilah, Miss Morality, and her lupanar, the State, with its oils and balsams and mighty gelding-knife!

A MEMORABLE ESCAPE

PHILOSOPHY is the keyhole through which the curious may peep into the smithy of the Eternal, where the great iron laws are forged.

The quest for truth is the human fondness for novelty—a highly specialized infantile trait. You must become as little children to set forth on these trackless mental wastes. Like children, you will be buffetted hither and thither by a million impulses. All things must be tried and tested—and cast away. To the mind of a child nothing has been proved, nothing disproved; all paths lie open. There is no evil; no good that has not the mark of human expediency on it. To the seer and the child there are no dogears on the pages of Life's book; no one has been there before, and it matters not what is written on the page—read, and pass on. All things must be approached in innocence and with a naïve fearlessness. It is literally true that

you must become as little children in order to see.

I wish to see men, like Spinoza, as lines, planes, bodies and circles, and so study them. Still, while I wish to see them thus for purposes of passionless dissection, it must not be forgotten that men are *not* lines, planes, bodies and circles—that they are living masses of matter in pain, and that there is more logic in their blasphemies than in their prayers.

The relation of man to the Great Necessity which is called God is not an ethical relation but is a geometrical one. There is no such thing as Providence; what we mistake for such is cosmic economy.

When the mind first perceives the illusory nature of the heart's greatest desire it is at that moment that the individual has taken his first step along the upper cosmic tracts. Once this glimpse is caught, there is no permanent back-going—there may be lapses to lower levels, a slipping back; but forever and ever the hyper-physical eye shall remember that one glimpse it caught of the Infinite.

It is at this moment that the larger lust begins. Earth life thenceforward will be a

kind of long sickness, with the salt savor of that endless sea forever stinging the nostrils of the mind, begging it hence and away.

He who believes that good is the end of the universe, tolerate him; he who believes that evil is the end of the universe, respect him—but he who says that ends are myths, follow him!

Looking from a very high building down on a great city one is powerfully impressed almost at the first look with the evident absurdity of life. One receives exactly the same impression as he ascends in intelligence, The eye and the mind are here in startling agreement.

Progress defined for the highest mind is a motion away from the centres of motion, an accretion of insight. The active being flows toward his objects; the contemplative being has objects flow to him.

All the waves of Time can be held at peace in the lap of the mind, all delusions can be held in the pupil of the eye, and the mouth of pain can be twisted into a smile. Against the infinite screen of Self the world-shadows come and go, and the fireflies of knowledge emit their light and fall

dead forever, and Chance undulates in countless waves, or swirls and spouts, bearing peoples and nations to the crest and silently dropping them into the hollows of Oblivion. Against the screen of Self is all this pictured, and each one may see it, for each is that Self.

If the objects of the so-called material universe are nothing but states of consciousness, then there is no one particular state of consciousness that has a greater validity than any other state of consciousness. If the mind is merely an interpretative organ—a way of rendering things, a manner in which the individual reduces an aspect of the Great Mystery to some degree of rationality—and if minds differ not only in degree but in kind, then Reality is an individual problem, and my universe is not your universe, my Reality not your Reality.

There are as many laws as there are separate existences. Huxley tells us about chalk, Plotinus about the Infinite, Swedenborg about angels. Can it be said that Huxley's interpretation of the images in his mind produced by an utterably unknown object in his hand is an interpretation that comes closer to some central Reality than

the interpretation of the images in the mind of Swedenborg produced by some peculiarity of his organism? If the angels were an hallucination, why not the chalk? If Plotinus was the dupe of his images when he believed that twice in his lifetime he had united with the Infinite, so is every being the dupe of his images when he unites himself with the finite.

We are no more "rational" than is necessary for our continuance.

Those states of consciousness which come from a diseased brain, and which we call insanity, are valid for the insane. Grotesque, fantastic, irrational they may be; but no less grotesque, fantastic, irrational, imbecile are the actions of all who dwell in the finite to the eye of the Yogi, the emancipated mind.

Delusion and aimlessness are the earmarks of insanity; delusion and aimlessness are the earmarks of planetary life. One need but look from a height.

Pleasure consists in the passing from a lower perfection to a higher perfection—that is, from a less complete realization of Self to a more complete realization of Self. Its condition is the instinct to eternal rebel-

lion, an undying tendency to negative all seeming finalities.

The mind lives in the Eternal in the degree that it puts aside intent, aim, object. They who shoot at targets never see the heavens. Inveterate swimmers are at last lost in the element they sport with. All intention is proscription and smells of death.

To the contemplative mind one hour is the measure of the life and death of a million suns—one day the hour-glass of all eternity.

The cosmic mind can have no evil thoughts; the vilest things can be pictured there and smiled at, as sunlight may lie over a brackish, slimy pool and will none the less be spotless light, or, again, as vile pictures can be shown on a white screen and leave the whiteness untarnished.

To understand a thing thoroughly forever puts that thing beyond the pale of hatred; to love a thing merely is to subject oneself to the possibility of hating that thing. Hence, understanding is the highest thing in the world because it includes hate. The emancipated reason of man is the Holy Innocent.

The illusion of good and bad: in the per-

formance of a "good" action the mind is focused on the effect that it voluntarily desires to bring about, heedless of the law that each act begets a multitude of other acts which have no relation in morals to the primal intention.

Pain is wrought by the intrusion of a personal desire, opinion, or prejudice in the presence of an inexorable law.

Misery, in the last analysis, is neither social, political nor racial; it is caused by the inability of the individual mind to discriminate between what is its good and what is its not-good. Social evils, so-called, are merely the lumping together of the many ignorances of many minds. Where all are blind all must fall into the ditch. He who can discriminate goes free.

The higher the intelligence the finer the powers of discrimination, the more things you will reject; the more things you reject the freer you will become. All social "remedies" direct us how to *get* more, not how to *be* more, how to *become* more. The rich dominate the poor; as a remedy the poor purpose to dominate the rich. Wherein lies the difference? The hawk watches the chicken and the chicken watches the worm.

That is, in brief, the game of society. Unless you abide in Self you are evil.

Evil is always becoming good; good is always becoming evil. Change is readjustment; and what we mean by eternal change is eternal readjustment. Hence progress is an illusion. For progress presupposes a constant net gain in an eternal process. Which is the same thing as saying that if we pour a peck of peas into another peck measure we have two pecks of peas.

The intellect cannot sin; what is called conscience is a wordy war in the blood—a strictly pathologic symptom; the brain listens to the dispute, and the "still small voice" is born. But the brain may smile and smile and forever be a villain. All things are permitted it.

All future events are decided—the intellect merely reveals the manner of the intention. Each tomorrow is already past, and related to eternity you have already died; related to Time, you still live.

The thoughts in the brain are nothing but the bodily appetites in another form.

All human development tends to the generation and perpetuation of error, for the more complex man's activities become

the greater the number of illusions it requires to stimulate his diverse activities. If man in his growing complexity were getting nearer and nearer to some great eternal, unifying truth, his activities would decrease as he neared the goal and human life would be characterized by a greater and greater simplicity.

The brain is the flower of organic life, and our thoughts the petals on the flower. The shedding of these petals, the ceaseless dropping, fading, of our thoughts reveal finally the worm in the bud—the nothingness of man and the futility of desire.

Emotion is the elemental cosmic fire; intellect the cleansing, soothing waters.

Herbert Spencer tells us that we cannot get beyond states of mind; thus we can never know the Reality of which mind is a mode of expression. In positing this Reality he had denied the possibility of apprehending it—a contradiction. There is a Consciousness that is *not* a state of mind; it is something immediately given—and in rare moments we know we *are* that Consciousness. Its presence is not apprehended as a state of mind; it cannot be *thought about*—indeed, it vanishes the mo-

ment we think about it—that is, the moment we have a "state of mind" about it.

In these moments we know that all our states of mind—personality itself—are merely a lower activity of that Super-Consciousness. It is not known through thought, but thought is known through it. It is felt as a Presence when there is the least conscious thought in the mind. It is known, apprehended, with a degree of certainty to which a transitory state of mind can never attain. It comes as a supreme Awareness, abolishes by absorbing Object and Subject, Time and Space. It is the datum of which states of mind are mere infinite data.

Flee wheresoever we may we cannot escape the Centre. The universe is composed of infinite centres; circumference and diameters are illusions. Endless space is endless centre. All evolution is a movement from centre to centre, because any point bounded on all sides by the Infinite must be a centre. 'The centre of immensities, the conflux of eternities"—there is nothing conceivable that is not always there—and There is always Here, for other than Here there is naught.

The highest kind of action is meditation.

Memory may cease, identity may lapse, consciousness may blow out, but Life cannot end.

THE MASQUERADE

THE belief in an external universe is the superstition of the senses. Of hearing, seeing, feeling and tasting have we woven these filaments of matter and garnished the immeasurable hollows of the cosmos with stucco and pilaster of seeming. The brain itself is only a dream of conscious force and this body of mine but a haunted house, itself forever withering and crumbling under the strain of its mutabilities.

The Ego, turning everlastingly on its pivots of inexorable activities, whelps its eerie spectres which the whimpering thirst for the familiar in man kneads to a provisional hard-and-fast universe.

Change is avid of her spawn, and the slime of circumstance breeds the brilliant bubbles which we are, only to suck us back into the swart of the grave, which is the womb of newer bubbles.

I move, I talk, I gesture between the thing named zenith and the thing named

nadir, but who shall tell me what I move toward when eternity and infinity stretch before and behind me? I speak, but who shall put a value on my speech when the ambushed forerunning Minute shall blend my voice into the spirit of a million gales and split my words into their infinite sound-particles? I gesture, but what do I hail when the phantom I hallooed had started out of the same hollow heart of things as my gesture? We stand upon a platform of shadows and hail the echoes of Appearance. We are the dials that mark no time; we are clocks with our circumferences everywhere and our pivots nowhere. Out on the crag of our supremest imaging there is nothing but—imagining!

See that headless, trunkless, footless, brainless spirit of man with its one tentacle of desire sprung like a hair from off the immobile, unstirred surface of the pre-creational protoplasm—that hair-like tentacle feeling its way from the cellars of the Uncreate up into the life-possibility, coming out of its swoon of a trillion cycles in nullebiety, bulging into—aye, fathering—this phantasmal universe of the "hypocritic days."

See how it wove that fantastic cycle of law which we call evolution, but which is only the ghostly tape-measure in the hands of we Wraiths of Desire. Evolution is only the method by which matter changes from protoplasm to putridity and the method by which mind ascends from imitation to extinction.

There lie cancelled in the sepulchres of the brain-cells and blood-cells of man more ingenious universes than all accumulated Mind can imagine; worlds the strange enginery of which would turn mankind into gibbering idiots if they ever caught a glimpse of them through some freak of the subconscious, ghost-fabricating spirit that is the soul of us. The ghosts of the antique worlds that are socketed down there in Time's soundless voids! When they walk we shall have a glimpse—if we retain our reasons—of the absurdity of this latest makeshift of the imagination in which we live.

So these cosmic trial-rooms have come and gone, and we and they are the million anatomical experiments of the Thing.

Moonless, starless universes there have been, and stones with brains, and men and

women who grew from trees, and lank, gigantic, formless beings who strode from abyss to abyss, and furry imps with twelve senses, and things innominable in universes that fructified and waned and shrunk into huddled corpses and are no more. Or, they live as faint reminiscence in backworld dreaming souls, little wrinkled memories in the byplaces of the subconscious, the half-erased memorabilia of the Almighty Mockery.

This colored ooze of matter which flows along Time's lubricious sluiceways—this colored ooze of matter which is our universe, think you it is any the less absurd than those foundered in incalculable past cycles? Cause and effect give you proof of rationality, you say; but what is the cause of cause and effect and the effect of cause and effect? Where is your ultimate? Under the cowl of Imagination there is the set face of Fear! You are a phantom no less than the spectres that stood in the half-lit rooms of your brain last night when you "slept"—the sleep of a dreaming.

That brooding vapor which we name thought sends off these glaring rings of matter which noose us the better to the mud

and quicksands. The beds of rivers, the bases of mountains, the roots of trees are of the imaged vapor that projects its shapes against the white screen of consciousness. Upstarts from our own tombs, we etch in the ghastly spaces that confront us suns and moons and the constellations of shining pebbles—and rub them out again.

The fangs of Change fasten on all substances and all things that are born have as sole dower a windingsheet. We are each and all of us separate urns filled with illusory flame that licks up shadows and that inter at last only silence.

We are Time's ail and Motion's malady.

To grasp and hold and possess a thing is the marriage of mockeries, the coition of shadows. Man is the wastrel of the inutile, ageless cycles. Call forth from the earth all that have gone therein and the earth would turn charnel-house, the very trees pale into ashy corpses and the waters swim with depth on depth of phantom faces and the Himalayas gray to multiplied skull-towers.

Such are we in these kilns of chance and change and illusion.

Little lanterns and bell-buoys—nothing

more are our senses; lanterns and bell buoys that guide the phantom Ego for a little while across a phantom, mirage-studded waste. Performance is the gallows-tree of Intention, and action is strangled in the hempen folds of insight.

Persons, things, historical incidents are the poetics of Change, the scenic properties in a play that is neither a tragedy nor a comedy. Rich in its buffoonery, it approaches the farcical or the pantomimic—a pantomime played in a darkened auditorium with a mortal coldness blowing out of the wings.

The spirit that rules life is neither a spirit of destruction nor a spirit of creation; it is the Spirit of Evanescence, a lapsing of shadow into shadow, a fusing and interchanging, with a perpetual tendency to extinction, for each thing tends to return to its metaphysical condition. All things are momentary, even Eternity, which is but a flitting thought across the blank surfaces of the Ego, unseizable, unstable; all that can possibly be is implicated in the transitory, confederate to Oblivion.

Pass the whole universe of sense-contact through the spectrum of the Ego's interior

vision and one has colors and vibrations only. Here Euclid and Grimm are of equal importance and they that built the Pyramids built things as vain and less beautiful than they who lie under the Aurelian wall.

RESPECTABILITY

NO word cows like Respectability. We constantly hear those phrases: "The respectable elements of the community," "the respectable citizens," "respectable people." And we pass dumbly, hat in hand as though we had entered a fane dedicated to some high purpose, when as a matter of fact we are cringing before a paradise of cowards, the cardboard gate of which is painted to look like iron.

On the waxed and shining ramparts of Respectability struts Conformity dressed like a flunkey. Behind him shambles the lackey Hypocrisy muffled in gold-leaf. From behind the walls, from deep within this Eden of parasites, is blown a sickening odor. It comes from the live beings imprisoned within whose souls are without drainage.

The dominant instinct in "respectable circles" is fear. The psychology of respectability is, thread for thread, link for link,

the psychology of cowardice. Long generations of "respectable families" have stupidity flickering from the eyes and bilious abjectness a-flutter on the cheek.

Respectability is a survival of the herding instinct of the lower animals. The plane of initiative, which is distinctively human, has not been attained. In the great droves of the respectable—a strange mixture of bovine and fox-like instincts—differentiation has not yet begun. The law of variation does not apply here. And this is because in these vast herds there are no individuals; there is only type. It is true that they are called by different names, but this no more signifies individuality than the branding of numbers on oxen signifies differences of intelligence.

The evolution of respectability would of course have to include the evolution of motion and its ramifications from the first Colorless Conformity, wherein Nothing was; detailing the metaphysical history of the first rebellious tremblings in that massed vacuum—the first spurts of color, the first sinful hankerings, the first defiance of immobility of the original sinful atoms.

Some such idea as this, I take it, runs

through the legend of Prometheus, who rebelled against the deadly-dull philistinism of the gods and who flung the glove—or, rather the fennel-rod of fire-anointed thought—in the face of Olympian respectability, with its Sorosis, ennuis and porch gossip, and who was punished by having his vitals nibbled for all eternity by the croaking ravens of the Olympian Status Quo.

Again we find it in another form in the war between the hosts of the Lord and Lucifer, whose quick mind, tinged with the healthy Byronism of that pre-Byronic age, conceived that memorable insurrection against the cataleptic respectability of Heaven.

Still, again, the legend reappears in Genesis, where the serpent, brain-full of knowledge and wisdom, stuck his fangs deep into the Arcadian respectability of Eden, shattering not only the complacency of Adam and Eve but preparing the way for Cain, whose heel, stuck deep into the sacrificial offerings of his smugly dutiful brother, flattened the nose of respectability and gave to history in himself its first Man.

In the sphere of zoology we are on firmer

ground. In the long run, mammals of the same species are militantly bourgeois. They think in droves and instinctively fend themselves against the incursions of the New. There are no doubt renegade whales and baboons with ideas of individualized destinies and deers that overstep the calcined codes of mob-action and who have analyzed the meaning of the mincing step, the bootleg glance and the homely fireside virtues of their companions; but there is always the restraint of a depleted larder and a ruffled skin and Opinion with its condemnations to divers hells. Variation from the type is never respectable. A reasonable resilience is often granted, but, in the long run, it is fatal not to do as others do. Whinny in herd-rhythm, snarl to the note of the drove, let your lowing be according to your station—something like this we conceive may be the rules of the sub-human protagonists of the "respectable elements" of society. And life is jigged in herd-time and the soul of the sub-human species lies in its lucent pickle.

So sub-human respectability streams into the human, passing over by narrow ways and mule-trails. As we know them here

they are the sons of God and Home is God's acre. They worship at the godhead of Authority, "things said," the embalmed historic lies. They stand solidly arrayed against variation from the mass, as do their four-footed betters. They all have the courage of rejecting their own convictions. They sit rigid in their moral tarpaulins. They make daily pilgrimages to their own souls, spotless nullities. The Kabala is in Philadelphia. The Sacred Stone is a nugget. Pretence is the first virtue among them. If they post to forbidden sheets, it is done on some moral hypothesis.

This giant silent conspiracy of mediocrity, this race-thesaurus of the average, has in all ages been the sworn enemy of all mental and moral progress. Respectability is the leaden weight in the scale of conservatism. It crucified Christ and egged Byron out of England. It excommunicated Spinoza and hurried with the fagots that burned Bruno. It invents anti-vice societies to shelter its mind against its own pornographic instincts. In all history Respectability has never given the world a brave act, a brave thought, a beautiful idea. Food and sex—they are the axes on which it

turns; for it life is only significant below the navel.

It is impossible to compute the number of beings that have been chloroformed in the House of Respectability. Bribed, beaten, threatened, the spark of moral or mental revolt has gone out of thousands of young minds and they have lived in those fetid purlieus and died with a chaplet of the ordained virtues on their brows, pews paid up to date, the coffin neatly beflowered.

At birth handed iron lances to fling at the sun, they came to cut them up into darning needles and book-cutters. Foundlings of ideas pregnant with dreams, they were farmed out to Rote, their dreams paling to ashy fears. Their hands outstretched toward the open-seas of life, they have felt in their muscles the palsy of will-lessness before the croaking cries of the landlubbers of Respectability. The fine purple coat of rebellion becomes a seedy house-jacket and the sandals of fire are exchanged for carpet-slippers that convey one noiselessly over the plush conventions. All who enter there have abandoned themselves.

The temples of Respectability are the

abattoirs of the quick and the catacombs of the virile.

Respectability is always dragged behind the Spirit of Age. It is the inveterate enemy of the innovative spirit. Philistia ends where ideas begin. What seems to be growth is really change of environment. Respectability is the same in all ages. They are the same people who drove Mary Magdalen into the gutter as those who held up their exquisitely manicured fingertips in horror at Richard Strauss' "Salomé." Respectability refused to accept the Copernican theory of the universe until it was hinted that not to do so would stamp it as unconventional. It refused to accept Ibsen as a great seer and poet until it found out that the seventh-rate literary umpires had swallowed him.

Nevertheless, the Viking spirit in literature, art and life should bless Respectability. It is the citadel against whose walls strong men may try their strength. It is a brazen hollow image, against whose passionless face warriors may practice their skill at lance-throwing. It is a proving-ground for those who go forth.

THE IMPENITENT

TO have the courage of one's transgressions—that is heroic. To repent of one's transgressions—that is merely virtue. All apology contains an element of baseness. To whom should we abase ourselves? All men are guilty of the same meannesses—and he to whom I bring propitiatory gifts will give them to some one whom he has offended. It is the penny that ever returns. No man ever asked to be forgiven a wrong whose knees did not quake. This joint-sag is the atavistic tendency to beg for mercy on the knees, a primitive obeisance to Strength, the "Peccavi!" of the lost.

The arch-impenitent awes us by his assumption of power; in his fine disdains we catch gleams of the elemental, the barbaric. His is the confidence of the predestined; the aloofness and soul-sufficiency that rely on Fate, whose will will be done. He is of the open spaces. Conscience, with its sick-

room airs, has not yet alchemized the Promethean fires in his soul to the poisonous drool wherewith the terror-hounded forever water the rank flowers of the past. He who is without conscience is without weakness—for conscience is the past trying to live twice, the frost that chills the seeds of godhood in us, the back-water that we hold to scour our souls when life is at low-tide. A poet of transcendent overdreams has recorded the fact that "Conscience does make cowards of us all"—and he gave us Hamlet from his hot, subtle brain to prove it.

To trace the evolution of conscience—of that pathologic still, small voice which mankind declares tells it when it is doing wrong—would be to write the history of mankind's defeated dreams. Anything that man can accomplish is right. By a trick of thought, goaded by some stern, masked necessity, he makes it so. What he has failed in he decrees "wrong." The race is eternally adjusting itself to its own weaknesses, which it styles its virtues. The individual soul is a hell of lost lusts whose ghosts forever trouble us with their claims. We seldom stop to ask whether they have real rights, whether the fetor of their breath on our pale, anemic

souls is not the poison that our later selves have breathed into these wondrous, ancient beasts, whom we have denied in our fear, but who lie deep-buried in the sands of our souls, mumbling and drowsing and calculating like the Sphinx.

There is a living soul behind that hand which in the shadow of the gibbet firmly waves aside the rose-water consolations of the priest. The gesture has the sombre majesty of the Inexorable. Murderer he may be ten times over—a murderer, like an adultress, is a legal fiction—still he will not sully his soul with that last, greatest infirmity—the cry of the human to the Eternal to reverse the iron order and sponge from time what time was bade do. We may hurl at the malefactor who is sullen defiance to the last our fatuous anathemas with the wonderful syntax, but in secret we revere his grim amiability in the face of the Irrevocable. An inflexible necessity hounds him to the end. He who builded the house, let Him look to it. The tenant must take what he finds. And if we forgive him—that is the crowning puerility of mediocrity. For at bottom "I forgive thee" means "I no longer fear thee." We never

forgive those who have it still in their power to harm us. And the patronizing forgiveness of Eternal Omnipotence, the pat on the head, to have the dust smilingly flecked from your coat by the finger of Omniscience—what great soul will submit to that?

Hope is a masked blasphemy—and repentance is the mask turned inside out. The self swells to huge proportions beneath the introspective eye. The ego, reeling drunk on its own private lusts—intoxicated by its very thirst—makes of its desires an endless tape-measure, which it unreels from the cradle to the pit; and even upon the brink of the clay-walled hole, with lean and flesh-poor fingers, it tries to measure some phantom, brain-born Beyond. We will have no destiny but our own, no wide-circling fate-full laws that have not provided for us, no wind that does not blow our bark to some haven mapped out in the chaotic foreworld for the special delectation and eternal safe-housing of that gilded granule—the fadeless and indestructible Me!

There is not enough natural faith in the world. There is nothing we have doubted more than the fundamental verities. All

believe that two and two make four until it comes time to die; then we ask God to make two and two five—or, please God, four-and-a-half; and we twist and turn and try to blarney Him down to four-and-a-quarter—"just this once, God." This species of God-baiting is called repentance. Few have the courage to believe their evil deeds were predestined, were the outcome of an endless past, the sewage of great world-currents. "I am I," cried Magda, the impenitent and regal—and that fine challenge was answered by "Come up Higher, thou!"

Each trivial act is dissolved in a governing law, and all law is noosed in a remote necessity. Each impulse is compounded of many impulses, and our faintest thought trails back to the sun. The very disbelief in a necessity for all our acts and thoughts is a matter of necessity. There is a temperament that would deny the fatality of temperament. The author of Job gave us a peep into the star-chamber where our individual destinies are decided. And Goethe, who himself smiled from his citadel set on the other side of good and evil, made Faust the victim of a conspiracy.

The philosopher of impenitence was the great Spinoza—Spinoza the remorseless and the daring. He was the master immoralist—or non-moralist—and from his spiritual loins sprang the great psychologist, the ferret-brained Nietzsche. God created time and Spinoza destroyed it. For him the past did not exist—his serene soul moved from Now to Now. Booted and sandaled, a Knight of the Open Road, he went forth in youth to do battle with the most profitable lie ever concocted—the lie of free-will—a priestly invention to absolve the Most High.

Spinoza's God we can pass over. It was nothing but a formula for ennui—an omnipotent, omnipresent, indestructible stupidity. It had no knowledge of good or evil, but abided in a transcendental state of total ignorance. It was a sort of spiritual glue that held all things together.

The days of this lens-grinder were white-capped negations. From the other side of life he watched humans playing and dissected their emotions. He conceived the emotions to be a sort of poisonous coil, a tangle that held man in the mud. For the tear-besotted sentimentality that is forever

looking back upon an arid past he had that profound contempt which philosophers have masked under a brain-smile.

Good and evil are relative terms and mean nothing to him whose vision extends beyond the immediate effect of each act. There is no code that lasts a thousand years. There is necessity, which is to say no man can escape himself. His most unlawful acts are lawful, and in nature there are no such things as transgressions. Or, rather, there is nothing else—all is transgression. Government is an organized transgression. Its excuse for being is that it can carry on the cosmic system of vengeance better than the individual can.

Spinoza was the most cold-blooded anarch who ever lived and certainly the boldest moral — or immoral — philosopher. He crawled out to the eaves of things, peeped over, and boldly took the leap. He burned all bridges, cut all bonds, wiped all yesterdays from his mental slate, asked for no philosophic quarter and gave none.

What is evil? he asked. Evil is that which gives man pain. Not only pain that comes from external things, but pain that comes from ourselves is evil. Conscience is evil

because it is the soul preying on itself. It is a Torquemada invented by sickly souls who still dwell in the mists of the emotional foreworld.

Come with me into the beyond-world of the intellect, of the understanding, and see yourself and your comic sins as my placid, immovable, passion-dry God sees you! cried Spinoza.

"Repentance is not a virtue, nor does it arise from reason; but he who repents of an action is doubly wretched and infirm," he says calmly in a celebrated proposition. The original transgression has inflicted pain on someone; but the act was motived not in you but in the endless past that stretched away before your birth and was latent in the sidereal gases. What can your repentance do but add pain to pain, tear to tear, anguish to anguish? All the waters of Araby will not wash your damned spots out, because the waters of Araby cannot inundate the infinite; and your weaknesses, which you call your sins, were predestined in unremembered past durations.

The doctrine of human responsibility is one that has its uses. Historically, society is an evolving illusion, and it feeds on lies

like the daughter of Rappacini lived and thrived on poisons. But there is a finer virtue than self-condemnation—it is self-absolution. Penitence is an hysterical tickle-self. It is like one of those scorching, belly-burning dishes that degenerate Rome concocted to stimulate a jaded palate and a blasé maw. "Confession is good for the soul," it is said—that is, it is pleasurable, and we invent sins for the pleasure of confession and repentance. Like dead flies in a bowl of curdled cream, so lies the soul of man in his tear-vats. The lives of men are an endless expiation, as Emerson, a crowned god of the Overworld, has said. The souls of the repentant are great penal colonies—their days a series of vicarious atonements.

Each day we should be apostate to a self is the essence of the teaching of Spinoza. The progressive evolution of the individual soul is like the uncoiling of an infinite chain, each link of which differs from the other. Some links are dun-colored, some are slime-corroded, some are of gleaming gold, some of neutral tints, and some fleece-white. The slime-smeared link cannot dominate the free soul. It was forged in hell; let hell look to its works!

There are two orders of beings; they whom their devils use and they who use their devils. Spinoza was Orestes triumphant.

Goethe was a spiritual Titan who strode through his own soul and reached an outermost gate where he signaled back a "Come hither and see!" to the sickly age in which he lived. Goethe saw life from so high a point that his rejection of life and his acceptance of life were the same thing. He stood where all things merged and comprehended in a glance the meaninglessness of any one thing and yet the necessity which urged all things to disappear in one another. "Sin," "evil," "pain" were to him fine experiences which no great soul should shrink from; rather should pain be courted for the residuum of wisdom that lies at the bottom of it. Does the physician who has inoculated himself with deadly germs for the purpose of furthering an intellectual lust regret his action if the experiment has yielded him a truth, even though looking on that truth has condemned him to death? So in the spiritual sphere Goethe would urge us to live our sins half-gayly for the knowledge they bring, and never to look

back lest we turn to pillars of jelly.

Let him who is perfect and stupid repent, for he has not yet lived; but he who has been bludgeoned and has bludgeoned in turn; who has been taken and given in the combats where each instinct fights for its own; who has made of his own life a shambles and yet peered at himself from time to time from the little white turret in the brain-apex—let him rejoice and repent not. The fox is caught in the gin and the star is enmeshed in law and the souls of men are matrixed in their destinies. The lithe-limbed Goethe swam through the flotsam and jetsam of his acts and brushed the slime-matted seaweed from his eyes—swam to a point where the waters meet the stars and escaped with Spinoza into the unarithmetical spaces.

How fast our sickly pasts would decompose and vanish in their poisonous mists did we not forever keep them alive with our inverted glances! We lie on the crest of an on-moving wave, but instead of taking our bearings from an everlasting height—the immovable present moment—we glance down with tear-stained cheeks into the hollow we believe we just rose from, or

stand wringing our hands in fear of the hollow we believe we are about to disappear in.

What is the outcome of our acts? Our most damnable lies may breed in time's mighty tangle unforgettable virtues. And if one could trace back those actions which make him complacent he would find them rooted in degradation that would bring the inerasable pallors to his soul.

The religion of Buddha is founded on the profoundest cosmic vision that ever illumined a human mind. The world is an expedient, and nothing is or is not but thinking makes it so. In the view of the Buddhist, repentance is as idle as rejoicing, for both spring from the illusion of self—that transitory agglomeration of millions of individuals which science calls cells. All are in the whirl of law; the individual is bound to a fiery, whirling wheel that one moment ducks him in mud and the next moment whirls him to azure vistas. You are the mud, the azure, the wheel, and the fiery whirl; you are all but yourself. So the Buddhist, negativing past, present, top, bottom, good, evil, here, hereafter, folds his toga about him and lies down to pleasant Nirvanas.

Self-consciousness may destroy or create. The first peep into ourselves terrifies us, and if we do not succumb to what we see in that glance into the inferno out of which we have wriggled we shall live to spurn it, or better, utilize it. Your soul will in time become a fine drama—a playhouse with one silent auditor. You will love your "sins" for the sake of the climaxes that their triumph or defeat leads up to. You will become your own hero, your own ideal of perfect villainy; and when you grow tired of the performance you can enter, through the medium of art, into the marvellous adventures of other men's souls, for all lofty minds at last dramatize or sing themselves in some form. Emerson's essays are the chronicle of his spiritual escapades, Ibsen's plays are his jungle-story, Chopin set himself to music, and Balzac explored himself and made of truth a gorgeous fiction.

St. Augustine, who was so black that he turned white, and who, like Tolstoi, mistook impotency for self-mastery, says that we may rise on our dead selves to higher things. Rather may we rise on our live selves to higher things. The past is dead only in

the sense that it never existed. Walt Whitman sang of himself in his entirety—"denying nothing." He was always just ahead of himself. Nature, he saw, had no penitential days; she was ruthless and blithe, possessed something of a naïve cunning, used compost and lily-pollen in her laboratories, made poems of her rain-days and fair days—and nothing was ever amiss. Both Emerson and Whitman recognized evil, but refused to admit the idea of sin into their conception of things. They lived, like Spinoza and Goethe, in the overspaces and were never troubled by that form of spiritual dyspepsia which comes from overeating at the tables of the past.

Friedrich Nietzsche saw in conscience the greatest evil that the brooding mind of man had ever raised up. The great rhapsodical psychologist, who flung down in passionate hate the gage of battle to the other-world roisterers, saw to the bottom of that pit of slime, the soul of man. Those who had lusted and failed of their lusts had spawned conscience, which begat guilt, which begat sin, which begat emaciation, penitence and heaven-hunger, which begat another world, where the strong men cease

from taking and the eunuchs get the best. The weak, the tear-stained, the neurotic, the diseased build and build, and into their earth-palaces they enter not, so they have conspired to overthrow the palaces that have been erected by their masters, the strong, the unrelenting, the never-regretting, the impenitents. And they have made of their weaknesses virtues and put craft and cunning into the seat of power and made idols of pillars of salt. The vengeful eyes of the lost flash from behind their masks of love, and the knotted veins of cruelty are concealed by a crown of thorns.

There is no motive power in regrets—that way lies death—or, worse, the jealous rage that begets him who loves his fellowman too much and himself not at all. Self-love is the condition of all love: the bud must flower before it can seed; the sun is the sun to its last outpost of flame. The impenitent is himself to his last act; he presages a new series, where evolution and devolution are one; where there is neither growth nor decay, but an eternal transition, a rising from equilibrium to equilibrium, from infinite sweep to infinite sweep.

THE ETERNAL RENAISSANCE

THE mystery of surfaces, the delight of touch, the joy bred of the melodies of motion, the ecstasy of contact with ideas that germinate newer perspectives and that pullulate with reminiscences that wear over their faces the purple veils of fantasy, mutilated memorabilia of ante-natal experiences—and all these things unallied to any idea of responsibility, mundane or super-mundane; just life for life's sake; the adventure of the mind in matter; the adventure of the senses in air and water and sunlight and rain; to sack the minutes of their possibilities; to privateer against the day of death; to skirt the coasts of strange lands built of those moods that arise in the brain just before waking time; plagiarizing no rules and making none; foraging on all men's thoughts; smuggling through the cellars of the sub-conscious the gold and silver of daily experience, to be wrought to unfamiliar shapes in those dark-

ened smithies; to gut life, to maraud on the farthest borders of the conceivable, and to stand accoutred at the tomb with the loot of all this world prepared for another apprenticeship in consciousness: Such is the passionate purpose of the pagan.

The miraculous does not happen; the miraculous is. The pagan attitude is the attitude of wonder, amazement, childish delight. Matter is haunted. Winter is haunted with the ghost of a spring. Withered branches with the ice glittering upon them hold latent within them the perfumed rose. The atom is a tiny house with many ghosts. Sunlight on my shoe is inexplicable. Aye, this sunlight is haunted—else how came this world? All science is classified folklore. Government by pixies is not one jot inferior to government by earthquake, fire, famine and evolving sidereal extinction.

So the pagan stands swathed in the sense of elemental mystery, translating all things back to their private, original glamour, and with the witchcraft of his holy innocence—which contains much of the riant *diablerie* of adolescence—unwinding the cords of complexity that man has wound round and

round the omnipotent Ghost that permeates all things.

By the mechanism of association of ideas we generally ally the word paganism with the words Ancient Greece. But that admirable flowering of the human spirit, those few centuries wherein Mind and Matter played the unrepentant prodigal with their own native inheritances, was no isolated phenomenon. Paganism is the instinct for liberty. It is a tendency, not a bundle of opinions.

A pagan movement is always a "new movement." It is always a rebellion against dogma, codes, conventions, systems; it is the deep procreant spirit that wages war against all forms of stupidity. It is the immortal red bud that miraculously, age after age, in literature, art and thought, bursts through the leaden strata of custom; the sword whetted with light that cuts the thongs of familiarity that are twisted round and round the living, palpitant soul of man.

There is always a renaissance somewhere in the world. The human spirit will not long be set in limits. It will suffer, but it will not rest. The pagan spirit comes to stir the dead, to blast the sight with its

supernal vistas or to twist us to frenetic maenads with its sudden inundation of Beauty. It may be the sudden epiphany of a Nietzsche in philosophy, a murderous force that burns up everything in its trail, including itself, after having set in flames the rotting ramparts of the orthodox gods.

Or it may be the quiet intrusion in life of a Walter Pater, who wove with the golden thread of antique dreams that great arras curtain that holds in the irrevocable quiescence of its web the stories of the spiritual wayfaring of Marius, Denis L'Auxerrois, Sebastian Van Storck and Florian Deleal;—Pater who was the renaissance of the Renaissance.

Or it may be the unannounced recurrence of a Pierre Louys, whose "Songs of Bilitis" conjugate the things seen with the eye and the things touched of the body in all their moods, tenses and inflections. With the language of babes he transfigures and rejuvenates a staled world. The wonder of trees, of lakes, of human nudity, of the simplest emotions assaults us like a reproach after turning these pages. The bellied, sun-flecked sail of the ship that lurches high-low in Mitylene waters, the singing of

rain-drops on the surfaces of pools set in a sombre woods, the music of lovers' steps as they walk to the tryst—simple, immortal things, with not a trace of moral millinery about them nor the rouged smirk of guilt.

William Sharpe was of those who proclaimed the Golden Year. In "Vistas" there is a Père Hilarion who forsakes his cowl and girdle at the call of love, and, ripping the Crucified from the Cross that stands on the shore of the waters that divide Yea-land from Nay-land, he flings it angrily into the current and plunges to the other shore—Yea-land—with the woman he loves. They vanish in the dawn. The same motive recurs in "Cathal of the Woods." A young priest is buried alive in a tree for breaking his vows. He loved a King's daughter. But from the tree the soul of Cathal prophesies the doom of the preachers of the new faith, the disciples of the White God of Galilee. Of the priest who decreed his tree-death Cathal sings:—

"Flame burn him in heart of flame, and may he wane as wax at the furnace,
And his soul drown in tears, and his body be a nothingness upon the sands."

Cathal becomes a tree-man and finds his

sweetheart, a tree-woman, and they become as immortal as Nature, spurning the ephemeral Gods of nations and their sapless priests.

And through the familiar labyrinths of life it is thus that some human *revenant* of the usurped gods always comes to pour his libations of joy, to jettison his fulness, to spill into the golden matrices of art this Hyperborean postlude.

If the erotic Sappho was a pagan, so was the austere Epicurus. In our day Renan and Anatole France, Goethe and Keats, Swinburne and D'Annunzio were pagans. Rabelais and Montaigne left records that smug gentility has not yet found the means of annulling. The spirit of scepticism is essentially pagan. Dogma and morals orb in the same beaten track. Both are parochial. There is a chance that man, evolving toward superterrestrial spheres, may stumble across the skirts of Truth some day; but he can never do it in the company of Dogma or Morals.

Paganism, on its intellectual side, is the spirit of receptivity. It feels all things and knows nothing, smiles and fingers with a pitying touch the shuttle of Destiny

which weaves such calamitous issues.

For what one *thinks* signifies little; but the *manner* in which one thinks reveals one's affinities. Individuality does not lie in our thought, but the way we characterize thought. There are no new messages for the world; there are only new messengers from old principalities; new eyes that reread the old parchments. The manner in which one feels a thought, that consecrates him.

Paganism is attitude.

The psychical root of paganism is feeling. Its test-tubes are pleasure and pain. Its metaphysic is the eternality of the present moment. Life is its own excuse and pleasurable feelings—mental and physical—are the anthemings of the glad gods on the keyboard of nerves. Religion is fatigue. To be "saved" for another world is to be "lost" to this—the adventurer grown tired, Siegfried hesitating before the rampart of flame, Prometheus recanting, Man the Viking on the seas of sound, color and menacing wave turned parish beadle.

And the "ethic" of the pagan impulse? It is this: Squander yourself on the winds, but be not blindly blown along with them.

Be the heart of the blast. Absolute submission to life is absolute mastery of life.

The emptiness of that word "progress"! All life, the evolutionary process, tends to dissonance, complexity. Differentiation in itself is estrangement from the common World-Root; and as we go to seek the Great Harmony it recedes before us. Circle emerges from circle, and the last circle is only the last illusive horizon. Each single thing holds the sought secret, but we spurn it. Science sees only in it a link in a chain. Each minute is only part of an hour, the disciples of method and system will tell us, when in reality the hour is the essence, the very heart of the minute. Pluck the minute in its entirety, and the secret of the hour—of all hours—is yours.

The pagan spirit can never die. It is itself the instinct to live, it is the eternal knocker at the door of the House of Circumstance, the Voice that calls in all centuries to the pursuit of Beauty. It is the spirit of revolt in art and thought. It is the cloven flame that consumes age after age the citadels of authority and their commanders sheathed cap-à-pie in their ethical petticoats.

SILENCE

THEY who are won to silence have passed the gaudy gates of Vanity Fair—the gates that open outward to the Purple Hills of Dreams. They have famished 'mid plenty and roistered with sick heart, and the noises they brewed and the beautiful dreams they spilled on the dusty highways and the soft lies their eyes have told are no more. For them the reign of the Real has begun. In silence they hear—and their souls are the noiseless footfalls of the Eternal.

Caked in those whispering south winds, burnished by those eternal suns that warm without scorching, swaddled in those white wrappings, gulfed thus in the immurmurous—they are the supreme critics of life. Before the tribunals of taciturnity the strident is rapped to order, and the gilded gabbler of the portico is sentenced to wear the motley and caper with fishwomen.

With shout and laughter we garnish the

days; but Sorrow comes with finger lifted to her puckered lip, and we are silent; or if we cry aloud it is where no one can hear.

Each action contains the germ of a destiny; each action is a distinct individual in embryo; and if we had a finer spiritual organ we should find in these great silences of the soul destinies and embryos and veiled Fates in myriad procession. The best of us, as we are, immured in our limitations, deafened by bodily hearing and blinded by bodily eyesight, can hear them, sometimes, scratching their messages on the walls of our being as they pass by.

I see a huge crowd pacing the boulevards at midnight. Fanfare, pell-mell, cackle—eyes that rove from point to point in anxious quest of Pleasure; fruitless pacings to and fro, inutile phrases whispered to gold-sodden, paunchy disciples of "sociability" by papier maché women—each soul in reality yawning at each other. I see also a narrow room on the top floor of a house shrouded in silence. A youth holds Shelley's poems in his hand. "Swiftly walk over the western wave, Spirit of Night"—he has begun that exquisite invocation written by the Boy of Spezia Bay. With half-closed eyes he

treads with Shelley the western wave and is afloat in the Spirit of Night, and he has heard more than all the mottled mobs of the boulevard, for he listens, while the mobs can only hear.

To be mewed in marmoreal silences, to fall with sated visage and cloyed tongue and a self, hewn to a million diversities, upon this downy bed canopied and curtained with gauzes and textures of strange patterns; to hear the uproar, tragic in its inutility, inutile in its tragedy, dwindle to a world-buzz, then cease entirely—that is to feel the rapture of calm, the ecstasy of conscious surcease, a passionate peace.

There are an awe, a wonder, a sheen of the ethereal in all fine silences. We here breathe upon the adamantine—and the adamantine is not; we give ourselves to float upon a far-winding stream tinct with ancient sunlights—a bubble drifting upon a greater bubble, blown from pipes greater than Pan's. On these stilled waters we may be immersed without fear of drowning. It is immersion without submersion, reality without illusion—and we are hidden, yet seen of all.

Hamlet's silences are the most impressive

parts of the play; in his soliloquies we recognize the soul of the troubled Dane. The Fates that lure him to the catastrophe evolve their deviltries in silence. The secret of the tragedy is spoken by no mouth; it is a Presence unseen, unheard, but not unfelt by that inner nerve that responds to the Idea in which the muddied action of the play is cradled.

And with what subtle, silent motions do the Fates weave their filaments of adamant around the trusting Othello—damned by a fine virtue, undone by his own nature, discovered, routed and bludgeoned to earth by an ingrained optimistic faith in the goodness of mankind! Iago is the fiend par excellence of dramatic literature. He is the quiet, grim architect of a most magnificent palace of pain. His sense of touch is exquisite. His building is a destroying. And yet in nothing that he says, in nothing that is heard, do we discover the depths of his extremest infamy. It is left to silence—to the imagination. It is Othello who goes out in utter spiritual darkness; and though Iago is gyved, he stands triumphant—and silent. In that silence of Iago in the bedroom of Desdemona the

Eumenides have paused to survey their work. Iago was only their instrument.

In those deep recesses of our being where the ashes of our dreams lie inurned in their bronzed, time-worn receptacles; in those caverns of the undersoul, where our projected but abrogated selves murmur against the decree that has sentenced them to those barren wombs; in all that past that is not, yet is everlastingly, we recognize something of the inarticulate, something that may not be uttered even by the heart to the brain.

Ecstasy is mute. Shadows curl around "I Will," and acts are the undoing of dreams. "I Will Not" is bred of the higher view. If it is cold at the poles of ultimate negation, it is so only in spiritual prospect. When one has fought his way there he has cast his laprobes of illusions behind. The sense of opposites is lost. There is neither cold nor heat on those silent promontories; there is placidity, the urgency to rest. The calm of a half-humorous disdain bathes us. The soul is then a rendezvous for shadows; the mind the Rialto of the dead. Postponements are postponed—and it is on the condition of perpetual silence that Eternity has made her assignation with Time.

Thought laps us all about and we are hemmed in by dreams. Speech and act at best are but a stammering. Our confessions to each other are mere stutter. The finest revelations are made to ourselves. Who has never paid a pilgrimage unto himself has never touched the Kabala. The Mecca of motion is Oblivion.

Elate youth darts upon Life and with rough hand and strident voice seizes his tinselled trophies. He takes the universe for his 'scutcheon, and by the divine right of vascular palpitation he claims the circling worlds. Blatant youth! where dost thou run—or, rather, where runnest thou not? In mid-life his cries have withered to a whine and our Don Quixote has dwindled to a vinegary critic. His elder age is a discreet silence.

Old age should hold its tongue. Like the walls of old houses, it has secrets to tell.

There is no soul born to flesh-woof that has not on a day heard the drumbeat of retreat sounded in its ears. We have fought and wept, replied and defied, but in the Unconscious our genius is chiselling the Hour—that fateful hour that shall put clamps upon our affirmations and sew up

our lips with the golden threads of taciturnity. Our scale of life-values has been wrong. The battles we have fought have only served to cloud our brains with the dust of combat. We see we have been trying to measure Eternity by minutes; thenceforth we shall eternize minutes. We smile—and take the veil.

In silence there is universality. Lonely souls seek the solitudes of nature because it is there the dreams of spiritual liberty come true. In these fastnesses are creatures disburdened of trammels. Winged and crawling things empty their souls of impulse as they list. In the wilderness desire and attainment are one. The spirit soaked in these silences participates in the wild riot of life—riot without uproar; revels that are mum; endless muffled motion. The soul passes into all living things. The silent observer becomes the spirit of the place, and his meditations are spun into the crannies of shadows and the crevices of unapprehended worlds.

Here man regains his lost kingdom and sits proudly throned on Self. He feels himself at the very core of Being, flush with every conceivable future. He is

welded into a One. What has been is jettisoned; what is to come is unvisored. It is Nirvana without annihilation. The squirrel that darts up the tree carries a human soul with it, and the bird that flies overhead is chanting a finer song than it knows, for it warbles for two. The forest dreamer rides on the crest of a fiery cloud; and the slime on the tarn—that is he, too. The individual is blotted out, and the mystery of the One-in-Many—thenceforth it is no mystery.

This is the only liberty man can ever attain, and the path lies through silence. Each must go his own way. There is a supreme release for each, but two cannot find it together. The unthwarted will, equilibration, quiescence, the suffusion of dateless days—would these be yours? Then rivet yourself to the silences, put your ear to the dark shell of Night, and fly the hubbub.

Man is a phenomenal fragment, a temporal circumstance, a momentary coagulation of débris on the infinite stream of Being. His personality is dispersed in death and meditation. In the vast upper silences the infantile I of daily blab fades

like the shadow of a dream. The whole universe of things lies stretched before us like islets in an ocean. The radiating streams of Time flow back to their sources and drag with them the bubble ages.

Like a Greek naked and sweaty from the games who plunges into a cooling stream, so we, sweaty and distraught, fresh from the satanic saturnalias of action, may plunge into the lustral calms, the healing silences—and forget.

POSTERITY: THE NEW SUPERSTITION

THE latest decoy set up by the indestructible god of illusions is Posterity. Man has been invited to live for various motives. Once it was for the glory of God. Comte proposed as a motive the glory of man. Now we are invited to live for the glory of Posterity. Nietzsche called Posterity the Overman; socialists call it "the rising generation."

No one has thought of the glory of living for the sake of living, of eating, fighting, reproducing merely because they give pleasure. Always there are devil-gods that call for sacrifices; always there is the bogey-word that demands obeisance and tribute of all our actions. Nothing must be allowed to exist for itself. Each thing must exist for the sake of some other thing. The perfume in a rose is only legitimate if there is a human nostril somewhere to be intoxicated; and the perfume of our acts and

thoughts is only a "moral" or a "right" perfume if it gives pleasure to the nostrils of God, Church, the Common Good, or Posterity.

Man has not yet become a good animal. He suffers from ideals, as he once suffered from superstitions. An ideal is a superstition in court clothes. It makes very little difference whether you believe that an east-wind blowing down the chimney on a moonlight night will bring you good luck or that an act that gives you pleasure in the doing is "right" if it benefits Posterity and wrong if it doesn't.

The East worships its ancestors; the West worships Posterity. The East lies prone on its belly offering tributes to ghosts; the West bows its head in adoration to the ghosts not yet born. When an Oriental worships the soul of a bit of wood we call him superstitious; when the Westerner worships certain letters of his alphabet which spell "God" or "Church" or "Morality" or "Posterity" we call it the Ideal.

And a smile steals over the brow of Puck and Momus reels in glee.

Ancestor-worship is the old superstition; posterity-worship the new superstition. The

old bottles are filled with the new wine, but the old labels have never been taken off. We still march under mottoes and tramp to Ultima Thule to the raging tom-toms beaten by priests and idealists. Still we signal a host of imaginary beings with the gaudily colored pocket-handkerchiefs of our latest trumpery abstraction.

All these words that man bows before one after another in his flight across the face of Time are born of the idea of Responsibility, that somewhere there is Something that is taking cognizance of all his acts and will bring him to account for them. Sometimes it is the bearded, concrete Jehovah of the Jews; now it happens to be a beardless, visageless, vaguely shadowed Posterity. The idea of responsibility is as universal as all other illusions—the universality of an idea or instinct merely proves its universality. From the feeling of responsibility sprung the most immoral and strength-destroying doctrine that we know of—the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement.

Responsibility to God was the first great necessary lie—for if the race is to be preserved (no one has ever found a rational

reason why it should be) lies are more necessary to its growth and sustenance than truths. Responsibility to God—or gods—was the first ideal, the birth-boards that clamped and twisted the brain and soul of healthy self-centred beings and changed their centres of gravity from the enkernelled Self to an all-seeing, all-recording Nonentity that had a name but no local habitation.

Man is born in his own incalculable anterior images, but he came to believe in his all-ignorance that he had been created in the image of another, a giant jail-warden who allowed him to rove the earth at his pleasure under a heavy bail-bond to keep the peace. The idea of an eternal responsibility to this abstraction germinated the first seeds of man's moral weakness, paralyzed his activities, sickened him with scrupulosities and filled him with the consciousness that healthy activity was sin. War began within him, a war between his superb irresponsible instincts and the idea of a vicarious responsibility, and out of that shambles issued the whining Christian, the lord of tatters called the Idealist, and that mincing prig, Conscience.

The idea of responsibility to God began

to wane with the dawning suspicion that man was not a celestial but a sociological animal. Conceiving himself to be this new thing, he now invented a new kind of responsibility called "social responsibility." The old mask was being repainted. The phrase "social well-being" was hoisted into the Ark of the Covenant of Lies. An act was now good or bad as it affected the community. Man loved his neighbor for the responsibilities he could shoulder on him; the corner ballot box was the Kabala; the community had power to bless or curse the individual. God had become a town-hall orator; the Recording-Angel had become a court-reporter. The era of the State-Lie had begun.

The transition is easy from the cant about living for the sake of "doing good in the community" and "benefiting the whole" to the ideal of living for the sake of posterity. The old obscure doctrine of blood sacrifice reappears in this new posterity superstition, slightly attenuated and shorn of its immediate and more obvious savage characteristics; but the old trail of responsibility and life-guilt is there.

We are told to live for the sake of pos-

terity, we must breed for posterity, eat for the sake of posterity, be moral for the sake of posterity, dress hygienically for the sake of posterity, and even die when necessary for the sake of posterity. We legislate for posterity, rear a child with an eye to posterity, tinker with the social system for the sake of posterity, tamper with individual liberty for the sake of posterity, construct Utopias for the sake of posterity, vote the socialist ticket for the sake of posterity.

It is the fetich, the Moloch, the Golden Calf of our civilization. We who are living, palpitating in the flesh and blood present have no rights; the ego is not sufficient unto itself; we are only straws to show which way the sociological and evolutionary winds are blowing; we are only the bricks and mortar that shall go to build the marvellous, fantastic, phantasmal edifice to house that coming Holy Family—Posterity. Our deeds have no value unless they feed the bulging belly of incalculable non-existent tomorrows. We are only as scraps of bone and meat tossed to that fugitive glutton, the Future, by pasty-souled Idealists and the spineless altruists who poison life with their doctrines of responsibility and

hoax the feminine with their metaphysical Cardiff Giants.

We are to be systematized, badged, classed, grooved, wired, stuffed. Our instincts, our very marrow, are to be inoculated by the virus of altruism and our faces beatified with the forerunning rays of the great Posterity Light. How we are to glow with the shine of "right living"—all because the altruistic quacks with their obsessions of Succubæ and Incubæ have dreamed a new dream which they call Posterity!

Weak, impotent, helpless before the immovable present, man salves his sore spot with hopes for the future. Not being able to regulate his life today, he promises himself a virtuous, vicarious tomorrow. Not daring to set up his Ego as God and its endless pleasure as sufficient motive for all his acts, he sets up an Alter Ego and calls it Posterity, as he once called it God, then the State or the Community.

With ecstatic eye and lolling, anticipatory tongue he awaits for his happiness in Posterity—something no one has ever seen, something no one can define, something that could not possibly exist.

AN EVAPORATING UNIVERSE

THERE are those who will look up at that great round clock without a circumference called the Universe with its two hands—Time and Space—of infinite length and pretend to tell you the exact time!

The older we grow the less we know. As the years roll over us we become more dogmatic about the few things we do know, and it is this dogmatism that is mistaken for wisdom, just as a deep, matured voice is often mistaken for brains.

The fruit of all knowledge is not knowing, but doubt. If we will one single action long enough its contrary will be born. A truth will not bear prolonged study. First it begins to look ridiculous; then it disappears into something else. Knowledge seekers are wave-chasers.

The believer is allowed his little illusion. He is a comic shape. He is set in limits, mortised in his mania, specialized, forever

mummified. God and the Devil both smile at him indulgently. But the unbeliever—the Seeker prowling across the Eternities, the Wanderer who rejects and passes on—is the tragic shape at which neither God nor the Devil laughs. They know that if in some unimaginably remote being-shape this unbeliever should happen on the thing he seeks both Valhalla and Nibelheim will crumble. The little comic shape prinked out in his cock-surety goes straight to heaven when he dies—and so ends. But the other lives in hell here and hereafter. And that's why the Twin Powers never smile.

We know that the character of our dreams when asleep is wholly determined by certain subjective conditions—that they are frightful, beautiful, obscure as certain organs of the body are affected. In the same way the whole external universe—with its endless moving panorama of trees, stars, animals, our own bodies—is determined for us by subjective conditions. The uniformity of nature is nothing but uniformity of brain-structure. The external world is a dream—more coherent, it is true, than the brain-pictures of the night—but the coherence is a matter of degree only, for the laws

of coherence are rooted in the mind.

Could we stand at the core of things we should see no difference in kind between that vision of height, solidity and sublimity which when standing at its base at high noon we call Mont Blanc and the vision of Mont Blanc in sleep. We transfer to the senses what properly belongs in consciousness. The perfume of a flower is not in the olfactory nerves, but in the brain. Perfume is a form of consciousness; so are light and heat. The proof of this is in the fact that anæsthetics abolish for us the whole universe, while stimulants that fire the brain heighten our consciousness of it. Dreams are nothing but blood stimulation—brain-expansion—and the universe of motion and matter exists under the scalp.

Thus to adjust ourselves properly to the amazing fugacity of things we must remain sceptics. The intellect at least should be sceptic; emotion should build itself some great object of faith—even if it be but faith in the grandeur of the sceptical intellect.

Opinion is Pride and Prejudice scrawling their justification on the walls of the brain.

If you stare at a truth too long it will

become an error. We should blink continually. Truth is not a thing, but an aspect. You must catch it off guard by continually playing 'possum.

Life evaporates when we attempt to seize it. What is the tangible if not a state of consciousness?

The survival of an idea—religious, philosophical, ethical—one that survives age after age through infinite changes and vicissitudes, may prove that idea to be a universal truth or may prove that the soil in which that idea has grown is incapable of improvement. Damp cellars will always produce fungus—and damp cellars are immortal things. What is fit survives; whatever serves is true; but *fitness* is antithetical to universality, and that which *serves* can never be the Absolute. So the longest surviving truth has nothing in common with the Truth.

The sublime and the ridiculous adhere in the same object. They are mental states, points of view—not different things. The action that at twenty we thought sublime, at sixty, with deeper insight, has become ridiculous. An inhabitant of the moon could see nothing sublime in its aspect. To

sacrifice our life for another is ridiculous from nature's point of view, for nature knows nothing of individuals. "What difference does anything make?" asks the cynic, thus turning all things into objects of ridicule. Still, the question is sublime!

The desire to do good is the source of all the evil in the world. In attempting to better our condition we add to the complexity of things. Like a man caught in a soft bog, the more frantic his efforts to extricate himself the deeper he sinks. In the eye of nature a good impulse is merely so much force which, coming into contact with another force, may generate a third force that will cause more pain than the original "good" force sought to suppress.

A pessimist is a man who sees life as it is. To present any aspect of life as it is in itself through the medium of art—that is, with the highest degree of impersonality that a mind still in the flesh can attain—is necessarily to have one's self stamped a pessimist. Hence, the disinterested seeker after truth is always the pessimist, the alarmist, the iconoclast. The optimist is never concerned with truth, or things in themselves—he is only concerned with the

status quo and its preservation. He is a chubby soul with visions, or a lean soul who is a victim of monomania. An elemental truth is always a painful one because the bases of the world are a hunger of some sort.

Ibsen's stark souls who stand shivering in the rush of inexorable forces, Nietzsche's pitiless psychology, gnawing with ravenous tooth at the rotten timbers of civilization; Gorky's perfet incisions, De Maupassant's fine ironic gesture—all these strike terror to parochial souls. But to tell the truth about things is not necessarily to be a pessimist. Every increment of power is an increment of life. To know the elemental truths and to stand calmly by the world's stink-pots, to watch with calm, unimpassioned eye and record with calm, unimpassioned pen or brush the workings of our futile passions react upon our souls and tonic us for battle. The man who looks under the lids of the world gains in mental ruggedness what he loses in color.

For a man to see life as it really is he should spend a year in a madhouse, a year in a hospital, a year in a jail, and a year in a tomb. In the madhouse he will come to

understand practical life, in a hospital he will see the soul of man as it slowly turns and writhes on its bed of needles, in the jail he will come to comprehend the meaning of universal necessity and catch upon his ear the wail from the depths of things, in the tomb he will meet Change the Comedian.

Then he will be prepared to think.

Mankind are like flies that have settled on a giant Gymnast. His novel feats we call the miraculous; his habitual contortions we call Law.

And then so glibly men speak of growth! Endless growth is an eternal and simultaneous advance of each desire toward every point of a circle that widens to infinity. That is the irony of all movement.

Universal unhappiness is caused by the inability of infinite appetite to subsist on a finite number of crumbs.

The life-happiness (or unhappiness) of the individual is a purely arithmetical problem. Each one of us could work the problem out to his entire satisfaction—that is, if he knew the kind of multiplication table the Unknowable is using.

There is a cold so intense that we come to believe it is warmth. There is a terror

that numbs. Sharp pain, by causing us to swoon, abolishes pain. There are truths so great that if presented to us suddenly we instantly recognize them as delusions. There are such tragic possibilities in our each act that if pondered over long enough they will evoke a smile. Thus do all things pass into one other; opposites turn out to be aspects, and aspects the relations of x to x.

Philosophical scepticism—Pyrrhonism—is the tendency of the mind to ubiquity. The finest minds are attracted to every point in the Circle—they are the arch-susceptibles. The greatest mind sees all things from all standpoints in one single act of intuition—it feels a propulsion from its every center to every conceivable other center.

Why should I go ghost hunting, for who has explained man? Where is there a haunted house that can compare with this universe before me?

Where are there rappings and creakings such as I hear around me here in this strange place of mind and matter—and earth and sea? Where are there more wonderful apparitions than these billions and billions of ghosts of flesh and force called

men and women that have risen from this eternal, immeasurable Desire in things? What sudden translation and disappearance more unaccountable or monstrous than this lapse into death? This is the Haunted House of Life in which we move around, and each single being is but a wraith above his own grave.

Sanity is the completest view of the completest mind, an instantaneous vision of each thing from all possible sides. Complete sanity makes for the negative attitude toward life, just as the concentration of a mind on a single idea to the exclusion of all other ideas tends to narrowness, monomania, insanity. All positive men are passionate men because they are not developed mentally. The Indian yogis, Pyrrho, Montaigne were the sanest of men. Beware of knowing only one thing and knowing it well. In its limits the rabbit is master of the thing it knows best.

We speak about "the great crises of history," which are purely imaginary crises. Time works her really great changes silently, is her own critic, and records nothing of importance. Sleep is crisis, waking is crisis; each turns on its own pivot, and the

great things are no matter, and history is the chronicle of sleepwalkers. Only Illusion is eternal.

Victory is always disastrous. It is the moment of disillusion.

Nature is not a series of Laws. Nature is infinite readjustment. An eternal Law is only an adjustment that has lasted a long while.

Irony is an acid pity, the despair of the brain, an iron mask that impotent tenderness sometimes puts on to seem the bravo.

Looking forward at twenty we say, "We are Destiny." Looking backward at sixty we say, "We have been Destiny's work." That illusion of twenty was the most important part of her work. Destiny we may never know; but we may know her masks. As force she masks as Free-Will, as Evil she masks as Goodness. She is Necessity dominoed as Pride.

To look on the trees and the sunlight a little while, to read a sage or two, to meditate and wonder at that which is forever vanishing, to sleep upon her breasts a night or two—then quietly to slip away, still young, still swollen with unbirthed desires: that is to taste life, that is to know all.

THE TRAIL OF THE WORM

THE human ego is an organ with a hundred pipes and one stop—Death. Life is Death's dream. Our nature is rooted in the Unconscious, and our life is but a little waking from that eternal swoon. The brain is never anything but the organ of dreams, and our body with its endless anatomical subdivisions is nothing but a huge tentacle of a Shadow.

Do men come back from the tomb? Aye, for the Unconscious is a tomb and all of us who breathe move and dream now—all who say they *are*—are merely reappearances, uneasy shapes moving across the blurred vision of the Great Syncopated God.

The irony of life! the irony of death! For only the dead are satisfied, and they would not be satisfied if they were conscious of their satisfaction. In that midnight of silence they dream not, and never comes to them the bitter ecstasies.

The irony of birth! the birth of a child is the triumph of death. At the moment a new being comes into the world a grave somewhere stands empty.

The day is a bitter almond; the night a vision of falsehoods—and the bitter truths of open-eyed sentiency and the fantastic jigging in the brain we call our dreams are alike fictions, solved and drowned all at last in that grotesque reality—Death.

Indeed, has not Hegel said that to live is a kind of blasphemy?

The one fact is Pain; all other facts are factors. The great central soul of things temporal is an unquenchable Pain, and the great central soul of things extra-temporal is a supreme indifference. Pain creates; indifference absorbs. And when the Supreme Indifference has absorbed all of Pain sorrow will be no more, and when sorrow is gone the universe will disappear.

The worst ill that can befall me is more easily realized by the imagination and is known by the intellect to be more probable than the greatest good fortune. The worst is always probable; the best is often not even possible. So in mentioning some great potential misfortune we always preface it

with the fear-begotten prayer, "which God forbid." But the smile of incredulity is never very far from our dreams of felicity. The Eternal has packed its mighty secrets in our pains, and if our cosmic memories were as profound as our cosmic experiences we would never hope. Our roots are beneath us, but the flower—the mind—is born anew in each life and dies with that life. The elder dreams revisit us at certain unexpected moments in our lives, and it is then, in a single moment, we nail truth, and see the unimaginable woe in things, the universality of anguish, the giant, writhing spectres of the things we have been. Pluck from that moment its gift of wisdom, or forever live the dupe of the Impossible!

For what is this lapse between two eternities we call life? Life is a myth and a mirage. The past never existed. We have clothed a few mean facts in a tawdry reminiscent fancy. Our memories of childhood are not the same as the childhood we remember. Our youth is a sunken, lost Atlantis; but when we lived that youth it was commonplace—oh, so commonplace! The future is a mirage woven of dreams. What-might-have-been is the mother of fantasy.

Or, life is a series of endlessly recurring dreams. That dream which recurs oftenest we style mathematical truth; the dream that comes but once in a thousand years we call a miracle.

What have we of light? The more light there is in the world the blacker grows the encircling gloom. Increase of light does not mean decrease of darkness. You cannot clip anything from the Infinite. If knowledge is infinite the recesses from which it is quarried are infinite. The stalactylic thought-formations grow more and more brilliant as we move farther and farther into the caves of consciousness; but it is because the darkness is profounder, not because the crystals are brighter.

And the lip-wisdom of science! The "uniformity of Nature" is merely the uniformity of a belief. A thing observed by all peoples, at all times, under all circumstances is still rooted in credence, and not in certainty, and possesses no greater claim to be the truth than one thing observed by one man, at a single moment, under a single set of circumstances. Truth—if Truth there be—does not lie in multiplicity, but in vividness of insight. That the sun will rise

and set tomorrow is not so certain in my mind as that the process of its rising and setting is inane, inutile. What I *know* of a process is of less importance to me than what I *see* in that process.

We know nothing of Law. We hear its reverberations as it thunders through the soul or catch its shadow on our retina as it weaves the dawn or evanesces in the mystery of death; but the thing itself cannot be laid hold of. Experience is hearsay, seeming. It is the same with thought. As in the physical world no two bodies can ever touch, so in the soul world no being ever touches his thought. Between him and his highest thought there is a chasm which even his imagination cannot bridge. It is girdled by a sacred fire that holds him at bay. Into its centre man can never penetrate. We but lie in its shadow. And man himself is but one of the infinite number of shadows cast by the syncopated breathing of the Shadow-Maker, the myth-weaver, who reigns excarnate in Eternity, who is everlastingly and who everlastingly Is.

Stability eludes the net of thought. We seek stability in change, and when it comes as Death we flee from it in terror.

Time baffles like a dream. Time is but the slime left by the slugworm of Circumstance as it crawls lazily over the white eternities.

Our acts ridicule our thoughts. The last sin to die will be Pride because it is the first and greatest virtue. Everything that is born with an ego has pride; those who affirm life do it through pride; those who seek death do it through a greater pride; those who battle do it through pride; those who renounce in sackcloth and ashes are ill of great pride. All is pride and a vanity and a mockery. And the first virtue was the first sin. Distinctions are circumstantial. Behind all masks of time and place there is the grimace of Mephisto.

Say aloud but once, "I am happy!"—whisper it to the air, whisper it into the night, murmur it to thy pillow, and already the navvies have razed the edifice, the fiends are at their sculduggery. Happiness and consciousness are at war. The lids always lie closed over the eyes of Happiness; her lashes are fine needles; you cannot rape her sight with impunity.

Ideas—Plato's verities—are at last as dust. Ideas grow senile and slumber and

die and lie in their graves for long ages and come again in the garb of youth and slaughter and slay and liberate; and this death and resurrection go on throughout all time. In Time there is nothing new; and Eternity is neither new nor old.

Who shall sleep and dream not? In what a place are the Ideas housed! What a slum's lodging-house is the brain of man! What strange, ragged, unshorn thoughts take up their home there in the night, and slink away in the morn, maybe never to return; what loathsome-visaged impulses take up their bed and board there! And sometimes there come wan, pale wayfarers who seem to bear about them the griefs of ageless days and who flit away as they came—like ghosts in the dawnlight.

Ideas reflect only the temporal order—that grim and grimy rent in Eternity.

For we are the ligatures of a Relation. When dream and deed are one then self-consciousness will disappear. When emotion, intellect and act are knit into such a unity that the joints and seams have disappeared, then comes the Man-God—then will the Ideal be made real and the Real be the Ideal.

Vain dream! It is the war of wills that breeds limitation, and so long as there is limitation there is Pain, and pain—the severance of dream from deed—brings us back to self-consciousness.

The waters are lifted to the moon, but will never reach the moon—so our dreams tend to deeds, but they ever remain dreams.

COSMIC MARIONETTES

ALL the great novelists are fatalists. Admission or denial on their part is beside the question. The man who believes in free will is a fatalist. He is temperamentally what he is. Fate is mental squint; it is the angle of vision, a viewpoint, physical compulsion.

Balzac called himself the "Secretary of Society," and his books are but an inventory of its forces. These forces he incarnated and called human beings. He thought the human soul could be identified with electricity, and conferred on it about as much free will as he would have accorded any other kind of battery. From his Jovian heights he surveyed the movements of these galvanized figures; recorded their attractions and repulsions; pulled them apart and showed us their insides; and made you feel when he had finished his task that his brain was the House of Life, and we the wonder children of his creation. His men and

women drift hither and thither on the soundless sea of Being, while the viewless gods of the deep are the masters of the currents.

Thackeray is always taking you aside and explaining the way he does the trick. He brings each of his characters into life with a drag on him—the drag of having to be himself. All of Thackeray's creations carry this air of compulsion with them. They are hand-me-down human beings, and wear the look of long ill-usage. In the nature of things Beatrix Esmond must become the Baroness Bernstein. She seems to expect some such destiny, and accepts it with delicious *sang-froid*. Foker is—just Foker; he coudn't possibly be anybody else, and Dobbin we know has been Dobbin from all eternity. Thackeray's belief in an overruling Destiny was so profound that his gentle soul, half-frightened at his conclusions, was always casting around for ways and means to let the old Gorgon down easily.

Turgenev's characters are gripped in a vise. They go through life like somnambulists. Bazaroff is an arsenal of tendencies. Liza is a mediæval nun that by some

curious freak has been revamped for nineteenth-century consumption. Her soul, shocked by the secular and buffeted by the trivial, sought again the cloistral glooms of the nunnery.

Hardy's and Meredith's characters are of a piece. The searing breath of life blows with equal force in their pages. Spiritual resistance is fate working from the other side. Chloe was blasted from within; Tess was blasted from without.

Zola's fatalism is more pronounced than any of these masters of fiction. This is because of the stress he lays on heredity and environment. His mission was to assort our souls and pigeonhole them. He was, indeed, the Claude Bernard of imaginative literature. Blood, nerve, cell—there *you* are. Pick out good forebears, for you are the wraith of a dead man. You are integrated matter in the process of redistribution. The history of your atoms is the history of your soul. You "elect" to lead a drab life; but your resolution counts for nothing; some day it shall melt like wax in the fires of sudden desire. The future is an ogre; it is the past that slays.

Zola's miscroscopic eye, his piercing

glances into the subsoil of life, are nowhere better exemplified than in his masterwork, "L'Assommoir." It is a fine study of the subtle laws that damn. The connection between an injured foot and a drunkard's death—where is it? That's the art of it. Moral logic there is none; but there is an intellectual logic. The links in the chain of causation—the connection between Coupeau's physical and mental fall—were forged by a cunning Fate.

Our lives are steeped in these subtleties. Each moment is big with ante-natal purpose. Our characters are pieced together by trifles that escape observation, and the way of our degradation is fixed.

Focus the mind for one moment on this world of the great novelists. What a piecemeal pageant! What a carnival of marionettes! What cosmic mummery! Tentative men and women; alleged lives; souls barely basted to a body; suggestions; thin pipings; the unevolved elemental; stumps and ends and shreds and butts of beings.

Here in this bogus earth-world, in this slimy Malebolge, everything is planned; nothing is completed. These children, tethered to the Iron Ring of Necessity, eat

the cake of hope; the brown bread of the tangible is thrown into the street. We are starving today, but it will always rain manna tomorrow!

Are these creations aught but somnambulists who walk in the brains of their creators?—and are we of flesh and blood aught but somnabulists who walk in the dream-cells of a hidden god? These master-dreamers, these wraith-workers—will they wake at the cock-crow of Eternity? Nay, they are bubble-blowers as we are bubble-blown; they are not voices, they are voiced; and Charles Bovary was as "real" as Napoleon Bonaparte.

These men who sketch life are used. They submit their souls to the spirit, and their characters move in the grooves of inexorable law. No man knows what he does; no great novelist ever knew what he was writing. His fingers clutch the pen, but the writing is mere copying; the original is in the nature of things. His brain is nothing more than a phonograph; he is a notary of the spirit, a transcriber of the Law, a scrivener of the gods, an assorter of junk.

Destiny works through the intellect, and

the seers of life are subalterns. They sail under sealed orders. They live with the Great Camerado, but not on equal terms. He is hidden—behind a pebble, it may be. You may kick it, but He smiles—for He is the kick.

The author of "Madame Bovary" was Madame Bovary. Flaubert was her secretary.

THE DRAMA OF DAYS

A DAY! From the first opalescent slur on the horizon to the last fire-flecked cloud that hangs on the last sunray, shot up from the abysm into which the sun has fallen, on through the span of ebon we call the night till the moment when that opalescent slur again slinks over the horizon—what things are spun for us in that time!

Time is a coxcomb, and the days are his many vestments. Days are, again, the calendar of Chance, the dial of our sorrows and revolts and joys.

In youth each day is a golden scabbard from which we drag a glittering sword to conquer some imaginative domain. In age each day is but another fold in a winding-sheet that muffles a gray, out-running universe.

In that subtle ebb of the spirit which we call memory there stand out gauntly, like shoals that rise from the ocean after its flood, days that were memorable in their

events, days with the shine and shimmer of some triumph on their brows or with the bitter record of some reprisal of Chance branded on their cheeks. Then it is that imagination, in that look backwards, personifies the days, giving to arbitrary divisions of time this or that quality, breathing bitter breaths into their thence corporate selves, conferring on that little congerie of minutes and seconds the qualities of malignity or buoyancy, placing in their hands a wand or a knout—giving thus to pleasure and pain a place on the calendar.

The spume of imagination covers the past, and we carve in that passion of retrospective self-conservation these little salient time-pegs whereon to hang the rags and tatters of memory. Wonder-children that we are, the eternal *revenants* of the indissoluble Spectre, it is thus we breathe the breath of life into our old selves and multiply our ghosts and replenish our empty mental wardrobes.

On such a day—now that the years have pelted us we see it—Destiny came to us spying from its lurk-hole in a trifle. We have come to know that little things decide; big things are only decisive.

Each second has a sliding panel over its surface; behind it, in its lair, sprawls the Sphinx, scrawling in the slime of circumstance our future days.

That day we laughed and we were doomed on that very day; this day we groaned and we were elected to joy. We know not what we do—we only know what we have done.

Time is a moth that settles and nibbles where the dust has gathered. There are monstrous gaps in our days. We are lucky if ten days in each year are saved to our memory. That grave-like taciturnity between remembered days! To memory and identity it is just as though one had not been. And sometimes from the depths of the Unconscious, from that unfathomable sea whereto we are finally ushered, there will start up, like the re-evocation of lost islands, a day long forgotten, with still its shroud about it and the unerased tints and hues of death still on its body. The time-sea tosses up many a strange pebble on these naked coasts of abandoned days.

It is hard to segregate a day in memory. The emotions and dreams — knowing nothing of the mechanical inventions that

man has fabricated to keep himself posted on the progress he is making toward the tomb—are fluid, blend and link themselves by finer bonds than calendared tallies.

All our past-remembered life makes a series of lakes in the mind, or, rather, pools wherein, with head reverted, we see only mirrored epochs in our wayfaring. The day we lay on the grass, and looking up at the heavens, suddenly guessed, by a quick amalgamation in consciousness, the illusiveness of all creation, the impossibility of ever finding the relation of the finite Me to the infinite It—this does not seem to have happened on a day—really, it was only a minute in that day—but, related to our future spiritual existence, it happened in a cycle set apart for us by our destiny. The rough clutch of Memory dragging that immemorial minute higher and higher above the seas of mnemonic oblivion as the years go by has inflated and transfigured that minute in that May or June day to gigantesque proportions.

For the ego marks off its history on sundials and moon-dials that begin at the Greek Kalends.

And yet we hold to dates and days. They

are the timepieces of intelligence, and we use them till the dust of death clogs the works. It is the ineradicable instinct for the tangible that sends us back over our tracks seeking the specific day for this or that adventure or revelation. Our feet are moored to the concrete however much our heads bob in the timeless ether.

ABSORPTION: A UNIVERSAL LAW

ALL life is absorption—a sucking up, a blending of forces. Absorption and dissipation are the laws that govern all the processes of the organic and the inorganic worlds. I say absorption and dissipation, but, properly there is nothing but absorption. Dissipation is but absorption seen from the other side.

The sun dissipates heat and light, but the earth consumes both. Moving bodies pulse their vibrations into the atmosphere, and the atmosphere is lost in ether. The seed drops to the earth and is lost in the soil; the oak comes forth and in time passes into decay, and is soil again, and seed again, and oak again. In the gaseous flames of the nebular orb a universe of force is absorbed, and from the flaming retort of fire it is belched forth into infinite space in forms new and strange, to be absorbed again by withered worlds and passion-spent spheres.

A mighty and consuming thirst pervades things. Naked forces skirt the topmost heavens and the nether depths of the seas, seeking to be clothed, hooded, wrapped, shod, absorbed in matter. Who are the dead but those who have absorbed life, who in coffined silence await new unions in mystic spheres? Who are the quick but those who have come to this plane to absorb planetary life and its myriad pulsing streams of sentiency? Indeed, are the live aught but the peelings and tailings of ancestral existences—pale, wan relics of the dead, vibrant wraiths, trailing after them the forces and tendencies of their ancient lives?

The living breathe and move and have their being because they have absorbed their dead past selves, because they have passed through unimaginable modes of life and sucked into their souls the breath of the past. They stand before us mere echoes, sounding-boards on which a note or two of the Great Diapason is registered. As a sponge sucks up water, so do we suck up life. Our eyes suck in the colors and forms of the material world; our ears suck in sounds, our palates suck in tastes, our

nostrils suck in odors. These sense-ducts flow to the brain, carrying their flotsam and jetsam of impressions, and in that wondrous and ever-mysterious alembic the raw materials which the senses furnish are absorbed, minced, blended, and from the magic cells flow those complex ideas that give us "The Eve of Saint Agnes," or "Mona Lisa."

What is that vast dream that underlies the somnambulism of the ages? What is that Idea which coheres through incoherency and stands forever calm through cosmic clash? What is it for which the seer has pined, the saint has prayed, and the devotee has wrought? Absorption—reabsorption in the One. Names differ; tendencies do not change. And whether we be Buddhists and accept the idea of the non-personal Divine Intelligence that is the substratum of the phenomenal world, where phantoms squeak and gibber and call it life; or we believe in the One of Pythagoras and Plato, or we accept the Christian metaphor of the Father; or we yearn for the Pure Being, or Non-Being, of Hegelianism, or crave for immersion in the Oversoul of Transcendentalism—whether it be any one

of these, it is reabsorption we are consciously or unconsciously seeking. It is this intuition that is the basic concept of all religions and religio-philosophic systems.

"Absorption in God" is the primary instinct of the religious soul and the last hope of man. The temporal order is built of expediency; its construction has been piecemeal; its forms are transitory. It is a mere stop-gap between Eternity and Eternity. It is a buffer state. Built in time, grounded in the shifting sands of Change and Circumstance, it is destined to die with the planet.

It is the widest generalizations we crave. Science does not crawl from point to point; it circles from generalization to generalization. Each ending is but a beginning, and each outermost an interior. The horizon broadens with our ascension. Line merges into line, circle into circle, cycle into cycle, and still the press is ever forward. We believe we are absorbing, while in reality we are being absorbed. We believe we are discovering, while in truth we are being discovered. With each new obstacle surmounted, the under, hidden private Self circles into broader life. We pierce the

chrysalis of our last limitation and believe that in sloughing it off we are discarding it. But the Great Thaumaturgist never discards anything. The new is the old revamped. The skin we slough off drops silently into the Unconscious, where it is remoulded nearer to the heart's more urgent desire. It emerges transfigured as our present self. The mind, like the heart, has its systole and diastole. We escape into higher forms of life by daily dying unto ourselves.

In society—that vast and complex network of organized, objectified Will—this all-powerful law of absorption is seen at work pursuing as relentlessly and as inexorably its obscure end as in the purely physical or psychic world. The individual is cancelled in the family, the family absorbed in the tribe, the tribe obliterated in the nation.

The social unit cannot escape the fate that awaits it. As surely as the needle turns toward the pole does part overlap part and the segmental become indistinguishable in the whole. This law that passes up through the circles of social change is today apparent in the commercial world.

We hear much in denunciation of the trusts, those giant combinations of capital that absorb the small dealer and dangerous competitor, not by main force, but by a process as legitimate and as inexorable as the drop of rain is absorbed into the sea or the dew in the atmosphere. The trust is our widest commercial generalization—the instinct of the sublime manifesting itself in the world of give-and-take. As the great nations of the earth assimilate the smaller ones, and they, in turn, assimilate the tribes within their borders, so the great purveyors of the necessaries of life are drawing into their hands the means of production and the machinery of distribution of the whole commercial world.

The logical question now that forces itself on the mind is: Why not let the nation instead of the individual do this? Why not make the nation a trust and the people the trustees? Why not absorb these giant corporations into the fabric of the State, and put the stamp of approval on a law that will have its way, willy-nilly? This is the dream and the jargon of socialism. It is founded on the incontrovertible proposition that all things tend toward a common

centre, no matter how great may appear to be their surface diversity and differentiation from a common standard. It is this that makes socialism right. It is founded on the law of absorption, my euphemism for murder.

No one thing can long remain wholly independent. A human being may rise to indefinite heights on the rungs of his environment; but in these altitudes the air is difficult to breathe. Gravitation tugs. Man channels his own descents. A remorseless Nemesis pursues those who rise above the common level. The ligature which binds man to man in works and days cannot be dissolved with impunity. There are moments in life when the individual may, like Ibsen's Master Builder, achieve for a moment absolute Selfhood, but his fate is written on the scroll of natural law, and from his dizzy height he will be dashed to atoms. The ideal of absolute individualism aims, consciously or unconsciously, at achieving this quixotic independence. At the basis of individualism lies the competitive system. Man competes against man, and achieves power and place—or poverty and death.

And thus are all things woven of one thread. Who shall trace the curvetings of Law? Circle on circle towers above our heads in rhythmic windings. Whorl upon whorl rises above us, and its mystic spirality is lost in the Unapparent.

Our souls are engulfed for an aeon or two but to reappear on the curved surface of consciousness. Like vigorous swimmers who plunge beneath the watery avalanche only to rise sound and whole on the placid surface beyond the breakers, so do we sport in the eternal forces. As an eagle circles round and round over unknown seas, so we rise higher and higher on the crest of the laws that have ferried us hither and that shall ferry us beyond. Microcosm melts into macrocosm; the less flows molten into the greater; the trivial dissolves in the significant, and through all the Will is promulgated.

In spouting mud and elemental mist—the Dream of Absorption was there; in paleozoic slime—the Dream was there; in the boundless underworld of instinct and blind procreation—the Dream was there. Belt and buckle and chain have burst and fallen into the past; belt and buckle and chain

are forged—and the Dream persists. When the earth shall be hooded in flame and its poles capped and shod in vapor—the Dream will be there.

Plunging from birth to rebirth, the soul of Man gnaws and files at his gyves. Limitation he recognizes as his one enemy. Through storm and bloom and the press of circumstance he seeks to clasp the Ultra-Generalization. Systems and codes he sloughs off like snake-skin. Time and space wilt in the breath of his Desire. He labors to force the Northwest Passage to the Polar Seas of Quiescence. He ponders on his latest, newest route to the Indies of Passivity.

Absorption is God's method—God, who is the last, the final Equilibration, the Spent Dynamic, the Eternal Static.

ACATALEPSY

THE doctrine of the Acataleptics was the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of things. Pyrrho is the supreme acataleptic among the ancients. Anatole France is the supreme acataleptic among the moderns. All opinion is heretical. To say "I know" is to put the stamp of ignorance on one's self. If catalepsy is a possession, acatalepsy is the state of ultimate freedom. It is a condition of transcendental ignorance. The brain of the acataleptic is an Eye that through an eternity of time focuses its vision in an infinite number of directions. The world is a whimsy. Nothing can be proven, nothing can be disproven. "Eureka!" was uttered by a madman.

Acatalepsy is the ecstasy of indifference. It is the Nirvana of knowledge. Pyrrho lived in a world without longitude or latitude. The "I think, therefore I am" of Descartes would have been written, "I think, therefore I only think I am" by

Pyrrho. At the touch of this Prospero of negations the dogmas of the world crumble to dust and the dear truths we have nuzzled on our bosoms turn to fantastic mockeries.

Flux and reflux, eternal transition—what do we know? Belief of any kind is a species of hypnosis. Certainty is the superstition of the senses. Time is an illusion. Eternity is a word. Each thing is only a mask for some other thing. Names are the placards we put on incomprehensible objects. Nature winks at us slyly. There is a Rabelaisian hilarity on the face of the external universe, as if it would say, "Presto! Behold me! Behold me not! Hold tightly to your possessions, man; whatever is is not. That is my supreme jest."

This monster of gullibility, man, believes in what he sees and touches—that it is just that thing, and nothing else! He arranges his beliefs just as he arranges his clothes in his wardrobe. His world is as definite as a map for a townsite. His God could be stowed away in a bandbox.

The eternal Sancho Panza on his ass of Certitude! He munches his brown bread and cheese in the Garden of Hesperus. He picnics in the empyrean. He shambles over

the stars. He is the vulgar Knower. He moves in an incomprehensible Mystery. But he never suspects. His universe is solid and substantial. His brain is a yard-stick. In the great hurricane of atoms he cautiously raises a parasol called a creed. "It is ten o'clock," "It is noon," he says. How does he know? It is forever the Hour of the Eternal.

The sceptic is a bankrupt who through all eternity cannot rehabilitate himself. In No-Man's-Land he is a Sultan. The nets woven by the system-makers will never strangle him in their folds. Through the walls of all the granite superstitions, whether they are scientific, political or religious, he passes like a ghost. He is the mystic of realism.

If Shakespeare created a world, Montaigne destroyed a sidereal system. Only the absurd is true. The senses lie, the brain lies, consciousness lies. How do we know they lie? Because another lie says so.

The acataleptic glance melts the light of the stars and puts out the sun. Acatalepsis! In the retorts of its brain it melts cosmologies and gods. It puts its finger on Death and says, "Not proven." It puts

its ear to the heart of Life thundering in its Gargantuan hulk of matter and says, "Thou art only a seeming."

Crescent and Cross, Scarabee and Dragon fuse and evaporate in the mighty menstruum of this alchemic ironist. One folly is pitted against another folly, one monstrous illusion rises to confront another monstrous illusion. The iron gates of God are papier maché. Plato's Eternal Ideas are plaster paris. Brahma is painted fog. The celestial seraglios of Mohammedanism are sacrosanct pigsties. The Christian "Mansion in the Skies" is in cinders. The Kingdom of God is a fading mirage that even the dying are no longer able to conjure up. The Jehovah of the Jews is a Big Wind. The First Cause of theology is a spite-wall. The Ego of the Romantics is a huge dummy swollen taut with flatulent German metaphysics. Anarchism, Socialism, Protestantism, Agnosticism, Manicheism, Buddhism are the tabulation, consolidation and fulmination of mental and temperamental disorders. They are the passing incarnations of the Incomprehensible, the scoffing incantations of the immortal Maya; the radiant revelations of the Immanent Yawn.

In the omnipotent orgy of ideas the acataleptic preserves an indulgent passivity. While the battle rages he polishes a spy-glass. He belongs to no army. He is not interested in the outcome. Only the spectacle enchants. His brain is ascetic; his eye is gluttonous. Over the earth go the armies—over the earth and into the earth. He is at Troy, at Waterloo, at Gettysburg, at Verdun—there is always a Bloody Angle in the combat of concepts where the fray is the most picturesque. It is all the horse-play of ants on a star. Aristotle and Plato, Spinoza and Hobbes, Leibnitz and Schopenhauer, Pascal and Nietzsche—these are merely the gigantic oscillations of one pendulum.

Doctrines flow from the agy ill of personality. To be, to think, to know was the primordial heresy.

This little man, this little man, who comes a-whining into the world to solve the riddle of Being! This self-constituted aide-de-camp to the Infinite! This sculpted piece of protoplasm who with arms akimbo buzzes his prejudices into the ears of the Sphinx! This choreboy of a blind Will who believes he is moulding stars!

Mahomet went to heaven on a white mule, another rode into Jerusalem on an ass, and still another who had Aladdinized the world rode to death on Rosinante. All symbols!

Ah! If the sceptics dared laugh to their fill! The stars would founder in space at the uproar and atoms and potencies still unborn would age in their nothingness.

The petrified smile on the face of the ironic Nihilist is a smile that is a weapon. All the bobbing hobby-horses on the merry-go-round of religion and philosophy come to a standstill and their riders sit motionless when the Unbeliever is seen standing at the door. He is the grand dissociator of ideas, the surgeon of illusions, a snow that blankets all growing things.

Your dreams?—he skins them alive. Your God?—he splits it into an infinite number of particles and hands you back a hatful of waste. He is a magician. He can transform matter into force and force into matter, and both into the incomprehensible. He makes a witches' broth out of all the materials of human thought and brews from them—nothing, except it be his petrified smile or the glint of malice in his eye.

The idol-makers fabricate through the

aeons. There are plaster-cast images and images in bronze and images built of ebon and adamant. But an end is made to all of them with the bare bodkin of incredulity.

"What do I know?" asks Montaigne.

"Just that," answers Pyrrho from his tomb.

CODA

THE Jews gave us Jehovah, a fantastic old man of thunders and scourges, as testy as King Lear and as childish. The Mohammedans gave us Allah, who punishes with fire and rewards with flesh; an ironic, hot-blooded, Falstaffian God who acts as a "bouncer" in a celestial seraglio. Christianity gave us the symbol of Calvary with its pale God nailed between two thieves—which conveys this truth: Law and order come first; mendicant gods and thieves, take notice!

Olympus was an aristocracy. Sublime, cruel, satanic, merciful—these supermen and superwomen of the Greek imagination were based in life itself. They were the personifications of real aspirations and passions. They were bubbles blown from pipes of clay by beings who loved the world, the flesh and the beautiful. And so no matter how far these bubbles went into the empyrean they still pictured the earth, its forti-

fying hells and its redemptive pains and the sex-aura—worn not as a shroud as in the Christ-myth, but as a garment of glory. Olympus was a place of quality, the Versailles of the imagination; not a Vatican of diseases or a mausoleum of canonized corpses or apotheosized renunciants of questionable manhood.

Olympus was beautiful. There was there no stench of skulls, no reek from the unaired beds of Allah's houris, no insipid, simpering asexual angels whose whole eternity was spent in telling God the time. There were air and light on Olympus. A cosmology was here raised to the dignity of a sport. Whichever way you turned you faced the Beautiful. Whatever door you tapped opened on the Infinite. Every step on those heights was like a magical levitation.

Mysterious, suggestive, equivocal, in passing through the great Greek myth the imagination throws out its flaming colored shafts from its zenith to its nadir. Everything is fecund on those heights. Death is the one inconceivable thing. Homer and Aeschylus and Plato and Sophocles have been there before you. No matter. In that world every poet is a pioneer. The eyes

of those gods never say the same thing twice because their brains never focus twice in the same direction.

Those giant mosaics of a spent race! How many millions collaborated in the evolution of those dreams? What mind put the first tint of that stupendous vision on the dead palette of Reality? Who was that Rembrandt with the drop of transfiguring color in his brain? Who was that Phidias who chiselled with his brittle dream the brow of Apollo? Who was that Michael Angelo who charted in imaginative ecstasy that ether-capped Olympus that was to eject from its mysterious ovum gods and goddesses as long-lived as the star which fostered them?

Against that monstrous background of the Unknown that man in all ages gashes with the lightning of his thought Olympus stands out unalterable in time, a masterwork of alto-relievo whose sculpted figures are posed for eternity. The tears of Christ, flowing for two thousand years from the unknown heavens whereto he ascended, have not washed away that breedy world of antique thought.

Christ lives. Aphrodite reigns!

The Gods of Greece were not an ambulance corps. Olympus was not a dispensary. To be carried into the presence of Zeus on a stretcher was no aid to immortality. Paganism did not seek to amend nature or cleanse God. It personified the real. Facing life with every sense agape, it uttered a lyrical amen. Bounding from the heart of the ageless Mother, it uttered a hosannah to the Sun.

Paganism was dynamic. It took the part of the eternally pulsating atom against the frosty glamour of Nirvana. It struck together the cymbals of victory over the grave. It would have held Dyonisiac revels on Golgotha, and on him who was pinioned to the wooden Caucasus on that mount it would have bound eglantine and over the crown of thorns it would have strewn rose-leaves. It threw dice with Destiny, knowing that Destiny is a blackleg. To lose or win—there is no difference. To have lived and to have played the game—that is the glory. Power and Beauty, Ecstasy and Frenzy, a riant diabolism, the sense of a weltering joy—that was the Pagan metaphysic.

Man is a dike between Time and Eter-

nity, and he gleams with the waters of both. He is the corybantic apparition. His life is a delirium. He is a crackbrained God. His seventy years are an orgy of feeling and thought. This shatterpated upstart makes a superb gesture even before the gates of hell. The life of the dullest of beings is still epical. Genius is a dementia. The winged hounds of Desire have sunk their fangs into our souls and we have rabies.

Thus do I see the soul of Greece, and the gods that pontificated on Olympus are the multi-incarnation of that soul.

Front this lusty dream of man with the plush dreams of the theological dandies and the nanny-goats of morality of today. The lightnings that are locked in my veins, the passions pent and tombed in my nethers are sins!

Power lies abed and sucks the nipple of a milkless breast. Beauty petitions at the gate of Mammon. The envenomed Christ-blood still flows from those immedicable wounds that know no healing. And we who once beheld Aphrodite shake the sea from her tresses and once were chum to satyr and faun and in another time dogged

the footsteps of Diana, we are rammed into a manger and cuffed into a charnelhouse and puddle in the sweat of fear.

From that transstellar Olympus we are come to a carpenter's table. From the parley of the gods we are come to the bickerings of Gargantuan eunuchs. We who once wore the laurel wreath now wear the mildewed helmet of salvation. The beaker once filled with ambrosia is now a monstrance from which one may quaff an apocryphal Holy Ghost. Pegasus is become a Palm Sunday ass. Jason is a missionary who decoys the heathen, and his golden fleece comes from the fleeced. The Bacchic amphora graven with mystical festive rites has become a consecrated bowl wherein Ignorance dips its dirty finger-tips.

Christianity has amputated Life at the navel. It has watered the milk in the breast of Aphrodite. It has thrown the cowl of asceticism over Apollo. It has put a crown of thorns on Pan.

But the snows on Olympus are melting, and in the veins of Time are the seeds of the old gods, who are incarnated again and again on the earth. Religions are passing epidemics, but Paganism is as immortal as

matter, as indestructible as sex, as eternally legitimate as sensation.

Out of the purple seas of the Coming Time again rises the divine Aphrodite before my prophetic eyes, and at Her breast she clasps Eros, who is the Christ reborn, regenerated, paganized.

It is the Second Advent!

THE END.

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